Dec 2003
LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE
777 GARNER RD.E.
ANCASTER, ON L9K 1J4

CHRISTIAN COURIER
February 3, 2003 A Reformed Biweekly No.2708 $1.60

Kicking the butt habit ..... p. 12

Spirit-filled conferences on servanthood.... p. 16

58th year of publication

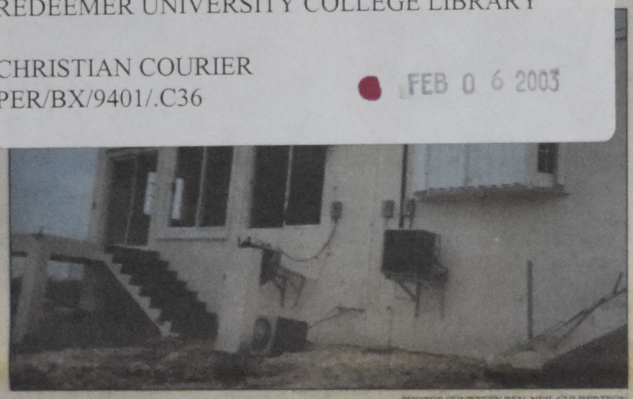
Pastor's home devastated by Guam super-typhoon

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
FEB 0 6 2003

Alan Doerksen

GUAM — A super-typhoon hit Guam December 8, the worst in 30 years. It devastated communities and homes on the Pacific island, among them the home of Rev. Neil and Janie-Lou Culbertson, former Christian Reformed World Missions missionaries who now work with a local church in Guam.

"Typhoon Pongsona (means: gentle daisy) hit our small island with a fury we have never before experienced in all our years on Guam," says Neil Culbertson. The Culbertsons were at home when the typhoon hit."



PHOTOS COURTESY REV. NEIL CULBERTSON

The destructive force of the supertyphoon both outside (above) and inside (right) the Culbertson's home is shown in these photos.

Roaring like a jet engine

"Winds, with gusts exceeding 200 mph., screamed through the house. Pressure generated by the storm caused our ears to pop repeatedly. The noise of wind ripping through vents and exploded windows sounded like the roar of a jet engine. Janie-Lou feared for permanent damage to her hearing.

"Square openings that had been the windows of our home now stood wide open to the fury of the worst typhoon to hit Guam in over 30 years. Coming down from an exhausting hour and a half of trying to stop the water cascading through our son's upstairs bedroom, I glanced into our bedroom. The sliding door was gone. The bed was gone. Every stick of furniture was gone.

"The driving rain sucked and pulled violently through the opening. In a second my glasses flew off my face and sailed down the valley below. I pushed off the door frame, breaking away from the forceful pull of the winds and ran down the stairs.

"The winds ripping through our home caused such forceful suction on the doors it was impossible to re-enter the room to rejoin my family. My wife, Janie-Lou, and our son, Chris-Kelly, huddled ankle-deep in water in a small laundry room with Bailey, the family dog.

I made for the bathroom instead and sat in our bathroom for the next eight hours crying out to God for the well-being of my family, thinking about Job's losses and mine, while mentally calculating the cost of the ongoing destruction to our brand new home.

"On Guam, long-time residents don't worry about any storm under 90 mph sustained wind speed," explains Culbertson. "But the supertyphoons, which clock at between 155-185 mph sustained winds with

See **PARTNER** *page 2...*

A conversation on the CRC and speaking out on war

Sandra Elgersma

LONDON, Ont. — "I had to agitate," said Peter Noteboom in his opening remarks for *Security, Terrorism, and Peacemakers: A conversation on the CRC and Speaking Out on War*, "I just could not sit still any longer. The CRC has been notably silent regarding recent military activities and I felt a need to provoke dialogue." More than 100 people must have felt a need to dialogue on faith and war, for a large crowd gathered in response to Noteboom's invitation on January 3 and 4 at Good News CRC in London.

Update on current events

Herm Kaiser, CRC Director of Chaplaincy Ministries, began the formal part of the evening with a historical presentation of U.S. military and national strategies and his assessment of the new U.S. National Security Strategy. Kaiser recently retired from a career in the U.S. military. He illustrated the competing values and strategies at work in the U.S. and raised concerns over a pre-emptive strike on Iraq.

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Conference organizer Peter Noteboom (left) with speaker Janet Somerville.

Extending the present context even further, Mark Vander Vennen followed, using statistics primarily to bring economic factors into the analysis. For instance, Vander Vennen shared the figures for the per cent of U.S. budget (41 per cent) earmarked for military purposes, the scale of the U.S. arms trade (provides 50 per cent of global weapons), and other related pieces that too often are excluded from discussion of war.

Janet Somerville, former General Secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, led participants through an invigorating Bible study on security. Somerville described the social pattern of "fallenness" that began with Cain – that of seeking security through domination and submission. The history of the Israelites, and of ourselves is marked by the struggle against this temptation to dominate.

In contrast to the pattern initiated by Cain, Israel's call is to live on earth a just, loving, neighborly, and contemplative collective life which does not conform to the logic of security through domination/submission, or the social patterns of the world of Cain, or the confusing promises of false gods.

Jesus was confronted in his temptation (Luke 4:1-12) by the same power of domination. His triumph over temptation pointed to another way, the way of community, healing, and prophetic confrontation. Jesus redemptive ministry, sealed in his death and resurrection, calls his followers to a life of grace and peace.

CRC witness to peace

In his presentation, Iskandar Saher (CRWRC justice education staff person in Indonesia) brought the realities of war, peacemaking, and faith into the room. His slides were a visual reminder that war is not a concept, but a reality lived out. He also shared with us some of the hard questions about faith and peace that he is asked on a regular basis in his work of peacemaking. For instance, what does Christian forgiveness really mean when you have suffered horrible personal losses such as the life of a brother?

See **CONFERENCE** *page 2...*

News

Partner missionaries pledge to continue, despite destruction

... continued from page 1

gusts that can exceed 225 mph, get our attention. Still, even a super typhoon does not usually pose a serious threat to anyone in a concrete and fully shuttered home. We had been through more than 20 such storms in just as many years.

"Pongsona was different, very different.... Pongsona blew up windows, peeled back roofs and snapped hundreds of concrete utility-poles like match sticks. When the winds died down, thousands were left homeless and our brand new home was in shambles."

The Culbertsons have worked in Guam for more than 19 years. In August 1983, they went out as CRWM missionaries, and Neil started his work as pastor of Faith Presbyterian Reformed Church. In 1989, the church achieved full local financial support, and started paying a salary to Culbertson. "We continue to work with CRWM in the capacity of Partner Missionaries — a designation reserved for missionaries who draw their financial support from other than CRWM," he tells CC.

COURTESY PAUL KANEGIETER

Janie-Lou (left), Neil and Chris-Kelly Culbertson in sunnier times.

Culbertson describes Faith Church, which was started in 1953, as "a rainbow congregation drawn from just about every Asian and Pacific cultural group in this part of the world." The church is now considering joining the Christian Reformed Church denomination.

The costly aftermath

In the aftermath of the typhoon, Culbertson estimates the damage to his home to be over $65,000 and another $40,000 in damages to possessions and furnishings. It was not insured against typhoons. Although he is seeking government assistance, recovery will plunge him deeply into debt. "Apart from God's help through his people," he says, "we cannot recover."

Why was their home uninsured? Annual premiums for such insurance are much higher, and it is not considered necessary, even by banks, for concrete homes equipped with shutters. "Ours was," explains Culbertson. "Experience has taught the lenders that not even a super typhoon poses a threat to a home so sturdily constructed. The 19 years we lived in the mission and later church-owned parsonage, further supported this belief. We never sustained damage resulting in a claim. We have, in fact, moved back into the church's parsonage, temporarily, as it was virtually unharmed by the storm.

"We built our home convinced that the Lord has called us to continue our ministry over our lifetime with the people of this region," says Culbertson. "The house represents our commitment to stay.

"We fit well in this island of disaster and delight. We have formed deep friendships and are well-known and respected members of this island community. Our witness for Christ has a proven impact.... Our long-term commitment to Guam has helped see Faith Church realize the dream of building a new and expanded ministry facility, which is just about completed."

For those who would like to help the Culbertson's repair their home, CRWM both in Canada and the U.S.A. have agreed to send any donations specifically designated for them by name.

Culbertson says: "The best way [to help financially] is to have local churches send it to the church we serve on Guam with special designation to 'The Culbertsons Relief'.... The local church (particularly in Canada) can provide individual donors with tax deductible receipts this way...."

Those not interested in a receipt for tax purposes can send gifts directly to Faith Presbyterian Reformed Church, P.O. Box 338, Agana, Guam, 96910, designated for 'The Culbertson's Relief'.

So far, the Culbertsons have done clean up and shuttered and boarded all the broken windows and doors on their home. But actual repair has been held up by lack of funds, and waiting for Small Business Administration Disaster people and Federal Emergency Management Agency to inspect the damages and make assessments to see if they qualify for any disaster loans, explains Culbertson.

Conference produces statement on war and peace

... continued from page 1

Working as a peacemaker means that Saher is not fully accepted by either Christians or Muslims, as he is asking both groups to deal with the hatred in their hearts. At the same time, Saher's presentation brimmed with hope and moved participants to alter the closing worship to include blessing him through the laying on of hands.

John Devries shared briefly about restorative justice and opportunities to "follow the prince of peace" in local relationships and communities. He made the link between working towards reconciliation in our personal lives and in the international arena.

CRC's historical position on war

General Secretary David Engelhard gave a historical presentation on the CRC's position on war. Synod has spoken on war and peace four times throughout its history (1939, 1977, 1982, 1985), each time in response to war. Consistently, the statements begin with an injunction to seek peace, and secondarily put forward Guidelines for Ethical Decisions About War, Guidelines for Justifiable Warfare or other topics. The reports do not contain guidelines for living as peacemakers in times of peace. These Synodical documents are good material for study and reflection on faith and war, and are available at **www.crcna.org**, with the exception of those from 1939.

DARYL CAGLE CARTOON

Despite the fact that the group was not an official body, proposals emerged under nine headings as the final outcome of the event. A few will be highlighted here (for the complete list, see **www.crcjustice.org**).

There was a high expectation among participants that one outcome should be a statement on war and peace by those present. A small group worked on this outcome, resulting in this list of eight statements:

As concerned members of the CRC regarding the current situation with Iraq, we suggest these statements as a basis to speak to our elected representatives:

1. *We are people who love peace. All peaceful means should be used to resolve this conflict.*

2. *We encourage the Canadian government to work with international law and multilateral structures to avoid war and work towards peace.*

3. *We express concern for the potential impact of war and its subsequent effects on the Iraqi people.*

4. *We encourage the Canadian government to expose the effects of current sanctions and military presence on Iraqi civilians.*

5. *We are concerned about the growing escalation towards war and the military buildup of weapons of war and mass destruction on all sides of the conflict.*

6. *We urge the Canadian government, as a neighbor of the U.S. to keep the U.S. accountable to its own claims of promoting world peace against the current reality of U.S. arms sales.*

7. *We are concerned about the impact of this current situation as it applies to an increase in tension between Muslims and Christians.*

8. *We encourage the U.S. and Canadian governments to develop alternative energy sources to diminish reliance on oil as an energy source.*

Another strong expectation was that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church should speak. Essentially a three-pronged proposal for Synod was put forward — to reaffirm Synod Guidelines at this year's meeting, provide pastoral advice to CRC members by Synod 2004, and review Synodical statements on war and peace (especially in light of new global realities) by Synod 2006.

A recurring theme in other proposals was education. Titles included "Educating and mobilizing CRC Congregations for Peace" and "Educating for Peace and Justice in Higher Education." Closely connected to these two was the proposal for "Equipping and Encouraging Pastors for Leading a Peacemaking church."

The accountability for these outcomes rose from within — in the form of a group that worked under the title of "Peacemaking Leadership." The group committed to creating an e-mail list serve on the subject (see below), collecting statements and actions of other peacemakers, and following up with those listed as responsible for implementation for all of the conference's outcomes.

It was clear to those who attended this event that God was present, and his spirit was moving among us. Prayer, singing, worship, and fellowship were an integral part of the discernment process and remain crucial as we move forward. The groundwork was laid — now it is up to you, us, and the working of the Spirit.

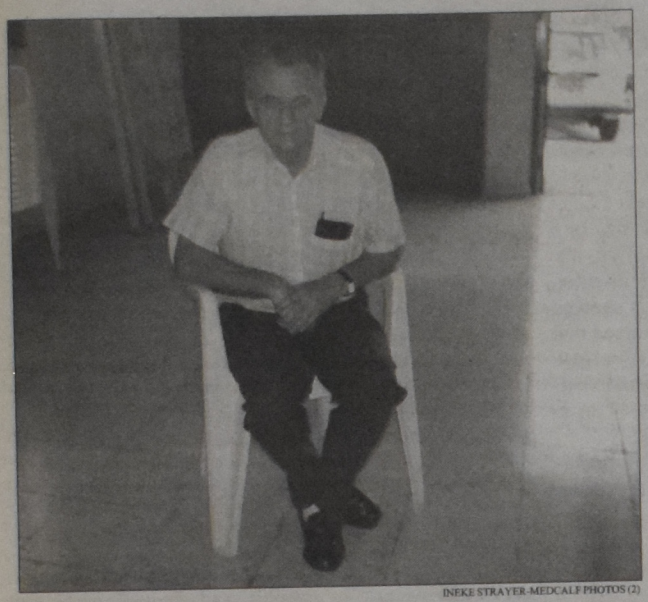
The report and results from this event are available on the website of the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action: **www.crcjustice.org.** Sign up for the CRC peacemakers e-mail discussion group to carry on the conversation and learn how others are so doing.

(See related story on page 6.)

Sandra Elgersma is Social Justice Co-ordinator for the CRC in Canada.

News

Canadian priest working in Cuba reports on 'the living church'



INEKE STRAYER-MEDCALF PHOTOS (2)

Roman Catholic priest Yvon Bastarache, at Santa Elvira Church.

Alan Doerksen (with files from Ineke Strayer-Medcalf)

VARADERO, Cuba – Despite Cuba's Communist government, a Canadian priest who has been working in Cuba for 38 years sees positive things happening for Christians there, especially in house churches – which he calls "the living church."

Yvon Bastarache is a Roman Catholic priest originally from near Moncton, New Brunswick, who first went to Cuba in 1964. He was "the first Canadian priest who came to Cuba after the Revolution," he told *Christian Courier*'s Ineke Strayer-Medcalf, who interviewed Bastarache in Varadero, Cuba, while visiting the country in December.

It might seem unusual for a Canadian priest to be working for many years in Cuba, which has had a Communist government since 1959, when Fidel Castro took over. The government has repressed the church, and has allowed almost no new churches to be built since 1959.

But Bastarache is part of a long line of Canadian priests who have worked in Cuba since 1940. By 1959, there were 43 Canadian priests, all from Quebec, working in Cuba, he explains.

"Now we are six Canadians," says Bastarache. "Five from Quebec, and I'm from the Maritimes. Last year, for the first time, we had two priests who died. One died of a heart attack, and one was hit by a bicycle." Before that, there were eight Canadian priests in Cuba.

Bastarache has served an impressively long time in Cuba – 38 years – with the same church, Santa Elvira in Varadero, in the Cuban province of Matanzas. But he observes that a fellow Canadian priest served 49 years in Cuba, until his death last year.

"We have received much more from Cuba than we were able to give," says Bastarache. Cubans are "a great people. They might not have much to share, but what they have they will share generously."

Obstacles to church growth

Asked what obstacles there are to church growth in Cuba, Bastarache responds, "the first obstacle is myself. I have to accept that someone is above me. Even though I have a lot of values... and I might be a charismatic person... I have to say to myself, 'I'm not the centre of the world.' There's someone above me. I have to be humble.

"The second obstacle would be money and material values.... We have them in Canada, we have them here. I think those two are major obstacles."

He adds that people need to be active rather than nominal members of Christian communities.

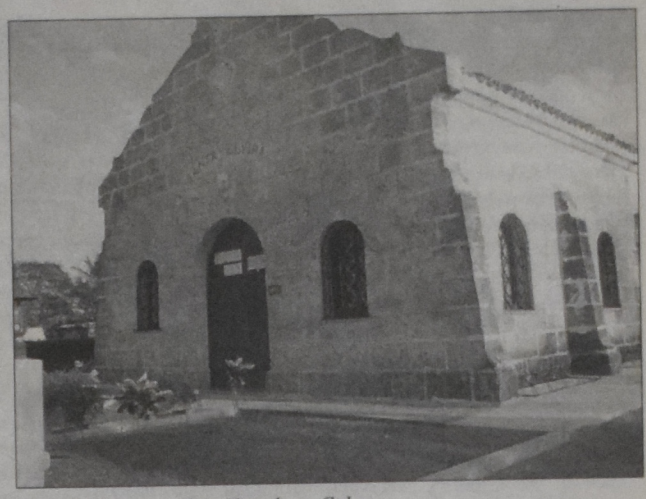
Bastarache acknowledges that Cuba's government has restricted the building of churches.

"That's true that since 1959, I think just one church or two was built in Cuba." But he asserts, "I think the real church is the living church" – rather than buildings. "More and more in Canada and the United States, they're closing churches because they're empty. The living church is a community. You have two or three people gathering together. We might not have a material church. But we might have a living church meeting underneath a tree, or by the beach, or inside a house.... I think it's good because the church has to be sent, has to go where the people are. When you go to a cathedral or go to church, people have to leave their home and go to a certain place. It's good. But I think the real church is where people are living for life, are fighting for life, are working for life."

Besides working at the Santa Elvira church, Bastarache works with house churches and visits people's homes. "Any church that wants to progress in life has to go where the people are," he emphasizes. Even after many years as an atheist country (the Cuban government ended the country's official atheism in 1992), Cubans "are not against the church."

House churches have a good precedent in the early church, which met in Jewish temples rather than in church buildings. Even so, "the church was very much alive," says Bastarache.

He looks to China for another example of this. "In China, they don't have that many churches [with buildings], but they have millions and millions of Christians. The living church is each person. I'm amazed how many beautiful churches are empty. We don't even have the money to keep them up. You have to ask yourself 'What's more important: the building or the person?'"



Santa Elvira Church in Varadero, Cuba.

While seeing the benefits of house churches, Bastarache notes, "once in awhile, I think it would be good that those little, living churches celebrate together in the big church, bigger community. I think more and more we will have to do that." Special occasions such as Christmas would be good opportunities for such get-togethers.

Recently, Bastarache returned to Cuba from a vacation in New Brunswick. "My friends, my brothers and sister asked me, 'Please stay with us. You've been in Cuba for too many years.'" But despite their pleas, Bastarache believes the answer for him is to keep coming back to Cuba.

How can we help?

How can Canadian Christians help the church in Cuba? Bastarache replies, "Pray for us. Quite often people are asking us what they can do to help." Another way people can help the Cuban church is to do useful projects in our own backyard – in Canada. For instance, helping out old, suffering or mentally retarded people. "I think if we are able to reach those people, to help those people, share with people in need even in our community, we are doing something for Cuba – because when one group is living its faith, that group has acquired for us a special grace, a special blessing from the Lord.

"Sometimes we think the best [way] we could help is with money. The best way is to try to put a little love where we are – as a person, as a community, as a church. I don't think the best help is money. I think the best help is trying to improve life where we are.... We've got to have priorities in life. I might not have much, but what I do have I want to share with someone – in love, in hope."

"DON'T GET LOCKED OUT OF RSP OPTIONS— CONSOLIDATION IS THE KEY."

Careful you don't misplace the key to your future. I can show you the significant advantages of consolidating your investments.

Clarence Weima, CFP
Senior Financial Consultant
Phone: 800-488-9817
Email: Clarence.Weima@investorsgroup.com

Investors Group
SOLUTIONS BUILT AROUND YOU
Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

"Trademarks owned by Investors Group Inc. and licensed to its affiliated corporations.

PIER 21, HALIFAX

75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

June 28 – 30, 2003

"The Dutch Immigration Story"

Verstraete Travel is offering
2 special escorted tours (Coach & Air) that also include Quebec City, and PEI.

You are invited to join Henny Vuyk and Earl Clint on a wonderful tour to enjoy good fellowship, great sightseeing and special events, AND the tour will include all the 75th Anniversary special events on June 28, 29 and 30.

We have a special presentation on February 6th.
Call us now to reserve a seat, and for additional details

VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES
36 Secord Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 1K8
Tel: 905-934-4414 Long Distance: 1-800-405-6088
Henny Vuyk: home office phone: 905-934-0666

Editorial

On debating the war with Iraq

Harry der Nederlanden

The current issue carries two stories on a conference spurred by the prospect of war with Iraq: a report on the front page by Sandra Elgersma and some reflections by David Koyzis on p.6. Gerald Vandezande states his opposition in no uncertain terms in a letter printed on p.13 (also published in the *Toronto Star)*. I stated my own misgivings about such a war several weeks ago, so I won't repeat myself here.

Many church leaders have addressed open letters to Prime Minister Chrétien and President Bush, pleading with them to avoid war in every way possible. I won't list them all, but they have come from many traditions besides those in the pacifist tradition: Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc. They're not all equally well-thought out. There's a lot of mushy, sentimental posturing among the clergy. Many see Christian faith wholly in terms of love and forgiveness, ignoring the authority and responsibility of states and rulers to uphold justice and to safeguard their citizens.

Important to witness to relevance of faith

It is important for Christians to witness to the relevance of their faith at this time of impending war. But if we step into the public square with half-baked notions that have only a slight connection with Christian traditions of reflection on war, we only confirm what most people suspect anyway: that the Christian faith is only a very private, personal thing that really has nothing to say for public policy other than that peace is good and war evil. No one needs the church to tell him that.

Level of quiet acquiescence worrisome

Still, I was glad recently to see groups of Americans challenging their government's commitment to attacking Iraq in peaceful demonstrations. The level of quiet acquiescence to Bush's policy has worried me. In a democracy, a step as drastic as a pre-emptive war against another country, no matter how nasty its ruler, should raise noisy public debate. In fact, polls showed that most Americans were by no means convinced that the U.S. ought to bomb Baghdad unilaterally, but you wouldn't know that from reading the U.S. papers. I was worried that Americans were censoring themselves in order to show a united front in a time of 'war'.

Actually, that is also an admirable thing. After the terrorist onslaught of 9-11 and the leadership demonstrated by Bush, it was good that Americans united behind him.

But they were carried into the impending war on Iraq by the momentum of the "War on Terror," which was a just reaction to an act of aggression. The U.S. resolve to root out those responsible and declare war on those who harbored them is hard to fault.

However, the connection between Al-Qaeda and Iraq is questionable at best. The "Axis of Evil" speech greatly expanded the "War on Terror" beyond the just punishment and elimination of Al-Qaeda. The old context – the so-called "Attack on America" on 9-11 – no longer applies. Iraq did not attack America and there's no evidence it was planning to do so.

Making sense of Bush's fixation on Iraq

It is, therefore, little wonder that both critics and supporters are applying other contexts, in effect, telling other stories, to make sense of the Bush administration's fixation on Iraq.

Some of the stories offered to make sense of the projected war, although they may be partly rooted in fact, are harmful to the public square in the long run. Since I'm opposed to the war, let me focus on stories 'our side' uses first of all.

When we create stories in which duly elected, fundamentally honest officials dedicated to the public good are portrayed as acting out of purely evil motives, such as a desire for world domination, a plot to steal Iraq's oil, or a master plan to establish a base in the Middle East, we are not contributing to reasoned political reflection. We are creating a morality play peopled with villains. This is destructive to democracy, which depends on reasoned reflection, political debate and persuasion, on give and take, on compromise – in short, on a trust that the other side engaged in the public square will abide by certain rules and norms.

If we use such extreme language that we really begin to see the opposition in demonic terms, we will be sorely tempted to resort to other means than politics.

This is not to say that we must not probe and sift the motives of political leaders. But we must not begin with the assumption that, while we are the peacemakers, those whose policies we oppose are warmongers, imperialists, militarists, baby-killers, driven by greed and profit, agents of global capitalism, contemptuous of the well-being of other peoples in the world.

We may not use that kind of rhetoric. It is usually false, and in the long run it damages something very valuable and fragile – the public square of our democracy. Look around the globe and see what a great gift it is to live in a country where, however imperfect, there is peace, order and justice as well as democratic freedom. It is a precious commodity that many countries have been pursuing for decades without much success.

We have it, not because we are smarter than other people, but as part of a long tradition and as institutions handed down to us. We live in a time, however, when such things as "traditions" and " institutions" are often described in predominantly negative terms – as structures more likely to oppress and dominate us than to make us better people.

I'm reminded of Germany in the years preceding Hitler, especially the time of the Weimar Republic. No one trusted the institutions of government or the processes of politics. Political debate took to the streets and the opposition became the enemy. Democratic government couldn't work under those conditions.

Listen closely to all sides

Rather than oversimplify the situation further in order to win support for opposition to war by painting the issues in terms of black and white – this time with Bush or capitalism or U.S. materialism or militarism or imperialism as the villain, Christians do better service by listening closely to the many stories, the many motives and aspirations that collide in this debate.

The fact that we are called to be peacemakers doesn't mean that we fulfill that calling by calling "Peace! Peace!" when there is no genuine peace.

Not a ready-made formula

At this juncture, Christians do their country a better service by helping to calmly weigh the complex interweaving of stories and motives from both sides, both pro and con. People like Chuck Colson and Jean Bethke Elshtain do us all a service by reminding us of the so-called just war tradition, which (unlike the knee-jerk peace talk of many clergymen) accounts for the use of force by the authorities to defend people from harm. This tradition is hardly a ready-made formula, however, as some say, 'Yes, just war theory provides warrant for attacking Iraq,' and some say, 'No, it doesn't.'

Those who examine the role played by the American (actually Western) need for a secure source of oil, or the impulse to establish its own understanding of international order or of (democratic) freedom or its overreliance on military might to safeguard its security also do us a service. We in the West are all part of that same system and owe our collective peace and prosperity to it, so it should also force us to examine our own way of life.

So I've shed no light whatever on the pros and cons of attacking Iraq. It's not a question that can be resolved by quoting a text from Scripture, and it's not an issue in which one side has all the right answers. It is, however, an issue that highlights the need for developing and nurturing the institutions of public debate that are part of a healthy public square, from Christian political groups to Christian think tanks, Christian colleges and universities and Christian journals and papers. Without a Christian constituency with a developed Christian understanding rooted in a Christian worldview, we have nothing to offer but unhelpful, self-righteous slogans.

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent biweekly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF
Editor: Harry der Nederlanden *editor@christiancourier.ca*;
Journalist, Layout Designer: Alan Doerksen
journal@christiancourier.ca;
Circulation: Rose der Nederlanden
subscriptions@christiancourier.ca;
Accounts Manager: Ineke Strayer-Medcalf
accounts@christiancourier.ca

REGIONAL REPORTERS
Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; Jacky Huberts, Langley, B.C.; James Kwantes, Abbotsford, B.C.; Stephen VanHelden, Calgary; Gordon Legge, Calgary; Jessie Schut, Edmonton; Valerie Walker, Halifax; Robert VanderVennen, Toronto; Margaret Dinsdale, Toronto.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Doug Roorda, Wendy Saunders, Erick Schuringa, Nelly Westerhoff, Bert Witvoet

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact the managing editor if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier
1 Hiscott St. St. Catharines, ON, L2R 1C7
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Fax: (905) 682-8313; Web site: www.christiancourier.ca
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375
We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Letters

Struggling with the role of women in church leadership

I read with interest the article by Lambert Tuininga (November 4, 2002) regarding Women and the Church. Mr. Tuininga believes we must allow women to serve in all church offices. I realize that this topic has been the subject of much discussion for many years already, but some of us are still struggling with it.

I attend a Presbyterian Church, where women do serve in all church offices. I serve as an elder, alongside women elders. I say without hesitation that I value very much the contribution made by my female counterparts. And there is no question, as Mr. Tuininga rightly points out, that women have made important contributions throughout the Bible. Everyone, both male and female, have important roles to play in the church, the body of Christ.

Not convinced

But maybe it's because, as Mr. Tuininga says, "We read the Bible differently," that I'm not nearly as convinced as Mr. Tuininga is, from a Biblical perspective, that women should serve in all offices. I say this regrettably, due to my very positive experience in this matter.

Mr. Tuininga suggests that, from the Reformed view of Scripture we learn that we must never isolate a given passage of the Bible from its context, and then he purports to look at the scripture from a Reformed perspective. He gives an example of Deborah (a woman) holding court over Israel, and states that amazingly, we do not hear one word of rebuke from the Lord — or from the men over whom she ruled..

In all due respect, I would suggest that if we read this passage in context, we find that Israel had done evil in the eyes of the Lord and that God had sold them into the hands of a Canaanite king, and they were under foreign oppression and under God's condemnation at the time of Deborah. Hopefully, the circumstance of the church today is not the same as that of Israel at the time of Deborah, and we should not consider this as an example for women rulers in the church today.

How can we reverse that role?

Mr. Tuininga cites various Scriptures, and also goes to great length to try to explain or justify why the Apostle Paul appears to contradict himself on this whole matter, although he admits that he presents only a small part of this difficult issue. There is other scripture relevant to this issue, which is of concern to me. In Genesis 3:16, God says that a woman's husband will rule over her. Has God changed his mind? Even after the coming, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:22-24 that wives are to submit to their husbands, as to the Lord, "for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, his body." How much more clear can we get? So, the big question I am left with is this: How can we, without clear biblical authority, reverse that role in the church (a wife being an elder over her husband)? And this is why I still struggle.

Mr. Tuininga asks if we might be opening ourselves up for ridicule by not allowing women their rightful place in our churches, and even suggests that we are limiting the work that Christ accomplished on Easter morning by not allowing women into all the offices of the church.

Based on the above Scripture, I think that the Apostle Paul might have some issue with these statements. Yes, we are all equal at the foot of the cross. That doesn't mean we all have the same role or function in the church (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

If we seek to do what is right, in accordance with the Bible, we need not be concerned if we are ridiculed, for we would be in very good company. Jesus himself, the apostles, and many of the prophets of God in the Old Testament were ridiculed.

Arie Hoogerbrugge,
Stoney Creek, Ont.

A huge chasm between viewpoints

After reading Ty Hofman's article "Whither the Reformed Churches?", January 6 C.C., it is quite obvious that there is a huge chasm between his view of the CRC church and the view held by many of those much younger. Hence the exodus.

Mr. Hofman suggests the adherence to the church's creeds and church order has become irrelevant for many pastors. Frankly, that may not be so bad. Creeds and church order are important but a church community grows from being Christ-like, not Creed-like. Many of these man-made rules and regulations have been at the root of the fragmentation of the Reformed church for decades. Each generation should revisit and rewrite the statement of faith to keep it fresh and current.

The "women-in-office" issue was a huge turn-off for our youth who are taught that gender is a non-issue and that everyone is equal under law and before God. Yet, in many of our churches, women are still not considered equal.

A lesson to be learned from mega-churches

Our church's spokesmen are often very sarcastic. Mr. Hofman suggests charismatic leaders have huge egos. Just because a new church is experiencing significant growth, why do we label the pastor an egotist? Another column writer in this paper recently called most Christian sports figures "phoney" for giving thanks to God in the post-game interview on national TV. Often comments like these are made from a feeling of inferiority and/or jealousy. Obviously the mega-church is doing something that most Reformed churches have been unable or unwilling to do. There may be a lesson to be learned from them. Newly-formed mega-churches are drawing the life out of lethargic churches in many communities because the manner in which many denominations "do church" is no longer working.

Today more than ever we need pastors who can relay the gospel message in understandable language, pastors who know how to teach Christian principles and relate those to our daily living. For seekers, the church needs to be non-judgmental, the introductory message simple and unconditional acceptance even if he/she is not dressed in their Sunday best. Where did that rule come from?

Sorry Mr. Hofman, retreating is not much of a game plan. There is a huge difference to "knowing it" and "delivering it".

George Kloet,
Oakville, Ont.

A second opinion on First CRC, Toronto

To *Christian Courier*, in response to the December 2, 2002 letter from the Council of the First CRC of Toronto:

I would like to clear up some things by presenting the point of view of someone on the other side of the issue in this church. I have been a member of First Church my whole life, and a confessing member for the last seven years (although I have recently requested a membership transfer). I also happen to be a gay woman.

A most exclusive group

In their letter, First CRC states that they have decided to identify themselves as an "inclusive" congregation. They also included a plea to be allowed to be a "safe congregation." I believe that is what First Church once was to those who could not find welcome elsewhere. They are no longer. They have become so engrossed in this one issue that they have forgotten their original intent to be welcoming and do not show a willingness to listen to those in the congregation with a different opinion. As a result, they have become a most exclusive group.

Although they claim to welcome people whose view on homosexuality is consistent with Synod's view, they have in fact been very hurtful toward many people who hold to Synod's view. Furthermore, not only were they hurtful to those in disagreement with the current decision, they were neglectful of those who offered no opinion on the matter. For these reasons, numerous long-time members have left.

It is very true that there is a need for ministry to gay and lesbian people in the CRC, but I do not believe that First should be considered a helpful resource, as they are going about it the wrong way. They are focusing solely on the political issue, which is about the least welcoming thing a church can do. I certainly was not made to feel welcome. Ironically, I, as a gay person, happen to be one of those they are claiming to embrace. Being accepting of and caring for all people, and not focusing so much on the politics of sexual orientation is a much better way of ministering to the Body of Christ.

Chris Van Meggelen,
Toronto, Ont.

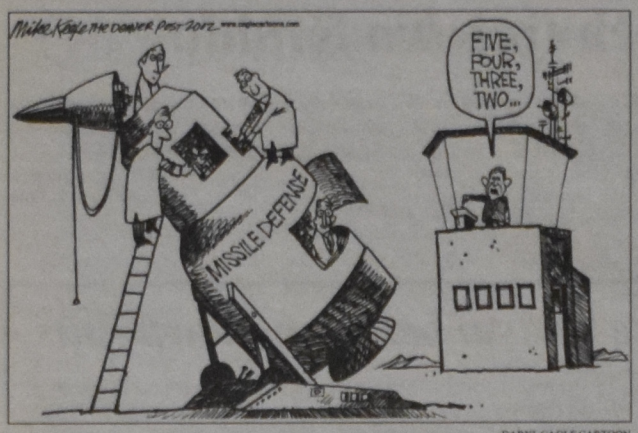
Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 09375. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 1 Hiscott St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 1C7.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY, 14092.

Subscriptions:	**Canada**	**U.S.A.**
(effective Nov. 11, 2002)	(G.S.T. incl.)	(G.S.T. free)
one year (26 issues)	$40.00	$32.00 (US)
two years (52 issues)	$75.00	$60.00 (US)

overseas one year $80.00 surface mail
Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (13 days before publication date); classified advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (13 days before publication date). See classified pages for more details. Advertising rate sheets available. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.
Address all correspondence to: 1 Hiscott St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 1C7.
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313, e-mail: subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca , advertising: accounts@christiancourier.ca

PRINTED IN CANADA



DARYL CAGLE CARTOON

Questions to consider about war

Sandra Elgersma

LONDON, Ont. — Synod 1977 put forward a set of guidelines to help members of the Christian Reformed Church make difficult decisions concerning involvement in war and to guide assemblies and officers of the church to bear prophetic witness and fulfill pastoral duties. The guidelines include this series of questions for members to pose and discuss:

a. Is our nation the unjust aggressor?

b. Is our nation intentionally involved for economic advantage?

c. Is our nation intentionally involved for imperialistic ends, such as the acquisition of land, natural resources, or political power in international relations?

d. Has our nation in good faith observed all relevant treaties and other international agreements?

e. Has our nation exhausted all peaceful means to resolve the matters in dispute?

f. Is the evil or aggression represented by the opposing force of such overwhelming magnitude and gravity as to warrant the horrors and brutality or military opposition to it?

g. Has the decision to engage in war been taken legally by a legitimate government?

h. Are the means of warfare employed or likely to be employed by our nation in fair proportion to the evil or aggression of the opposing forces? Is our nation resolved to employ minimum necessary force?

i. In the course of the war has our nation been proposing and encouraging negotiations for peace or has it spurned such moves by the opposing forces or by neutral or international organizations?

(Acts of Synod 1977, pp. 44-48, 550-74.)

TORONTO *Via* **2003 AMSTERDAM**
Martinair

Dates	Adult	Senior/ Youth	Child
Apr. **14**, 15	739	699	599
Apr. **21**,22,**28**,29	759	719	619
May **05**, 06, **12**, 13	789	749	639
May *17*,**19**,20, *24*,**26**,27,*31*	809	769	639
June **02**,03,*07*,**09**,10,*14*	839	799	659
June **16**,17,*21*	859	819	699
June **23**,24,*28*,**30**	919	879	759
July 01,*05*,**07**,08,*12*	959	919	779
July **14**,15,*19*,**21**,22,*26*,**28**,29	979	939	779
Aug. *02*,**04**,05,*09*,**11**,12	979	939	779
Aug. *16*,**18**,19,*23*,**25**,26,*30*	979	939	779
Sep. **01**,02,*06*,**08**,09,*13*	899	839	689
Sep. **15**,16,*20*,**22**,23,*27*,**29**,30	839	799	639
Oct. *04*,**06**,07,*11*,**13**,14,*18*	739	699	599
Oct. **20**,21	699	659	599

Airport Taxes/Fees extra $75 –Star Class $560 return
Senior: 60+, Youth: 15-25, Child: 2-14

Verstraete Travel & Cruises
(Offices in Aurora and St. Catharines)
36 Secord Dr. L2N 1K8 St. Catharines, ON
Tel: 905-934-4414 or Long Dist. 1-800-405-6088

Iraq and the just war theory

Principalities & Powers
David T. Koyzis

On January 3-4 an unexpectedly large number of people met at the Good News Christian Reformed Church in London, Ontario, as part of a conference on Security, Terrorism and Peace-Making. Organized by Peter Noteboom, of the Canadian Council of Churches and Global Learning Partners, it was prompted by the prospect of a new war in the Middle East. Many, if not most, in attendance were convinced that a likely American attack on Iraq cannot be defended on the basis of Christian principles.

There was disagreement whether the just war tradition still has relevance to contemporary warfare, and while all were agreed that peace-making is a primary calling for the Christian, some identified this with outright pacifism, or a refusal to participate in the employment of military force.

While some Christian communities, most notably the Mennonites, Brethren and other anabaptists, have historically embraced pacifism, this has always been a minority position within the church as a whole. The major Christian traditions, including Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican, have accepted that waging war may be necessary, provided it conforms to the principles of the just war as set forth by such Christian thinkers as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Indeed David Engelhard, General Secretary of the Christian Reformed Church, reminded participants of several statements made by successive synods upholding and elaborating just war principles.

I myself have deliberately refrained from taking a position on the justice of a forthcoming American attack on Iraq, mostly because to do so requires having more information than we are currently privy to. However, I believe the following points should be made in advance of conflict:

Divine mandate to pursue justice

To begin with, the state has a divine mandate to pursue public justice in both domestic and international arenas. Within the state, the governing authorities have the primary task of setting foreign and defence policies, although other communities, for example, political parties, interest groups, academic institutions, think tanks, and even church institutions, may legitimately have an input. This task includes maintaining a legitimate military capacity primarily for purposes of defending the political community and its citizens. This capacity is not to be used for purposes of national self-aggrandizement, but is to be led by the central jural task of the state, that is, the call to do public justice.

Under certain, carefully restricted circumstances the governing authorities may wage warfare in the interest of doing public justice. However, there is legitimate disagreement amongst Christians following the just war tradition on the justice of particular examples of warfare in the real world, including a possible attack on Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

A dangerous foreign, defence policy

There are a number of factors allowing for some skepticism towards George W. Bush's proposed action. First, a foreign and defence policy predicated on the assumption that it is possible to *end* terrorism altogether is a dangerous one because it does not set limited and achievable goals. Some of Bush's policy statements are cause for unease in this respect. I am especially disturbed by his recent implied threat to use nuclear weapons, which would definitely violate just war principles. Perhaps it's a bluff, but if so, then it's difficult to see its purpose.

Second, there is something to be said for addressing the roots of terrorism. U.S. policy in particular should be more evenhanded in its treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. A concerted effort should be made to bring the two sides to the table, using a combined carrot and stick approach that would, for example, induce Israel to remove Jewish settlements from the occupied territories and the Palestinian Authority to crack down on terrorist activities.

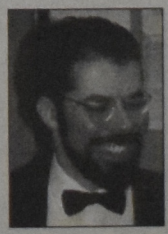
Former allies now enemies of U.S.

The U.S. in particular needs to re-evaluate a long term policy that repeatedly sees it building up forces to destabilize, say, Iran and the old Soviet Union, and then being forced to fight these very forces once they turn on their former sponsor. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are obvious examples of such forces once useful and now threatening to the U.S. and its interests.

However, such a radical change in policy will not by itself rid the world of terrorism. Similarly, the notion that dispatching more food and medical aid to the Middle East and south Asia will somehow lessen support for radical Islamism is naïve at best. Islamists have repeatedly stated that they aim to convert the world to Islam, through force of arms if necessary, and this must be taken seriously. Had the Byzantines and Habsburgs sent foreign aid to the Ottoman Turks in the 15th to 17th centuries, they would hardly have prevented or ended the sieges of Constantinople in 1453 or of Vienna in 1683.

When all is said and done, *sometimes it is necessary to fight against avowed enemies who mean to harm our political community and our fellow citizens*. A legitimate emphasis on nonviolent forms of peacemaking will not change this necessity, which is part and parcel of the state's calling to do public justice. Does a forthcoming war with Iraq qualify as one of these times? Although I have grave reservations about a number of elements of U.S. foreign policy, I would not altogether rule out the possibility.

A final point should be made. If we Christians are to address our governments with respect to security issues, as we ought to do, then we must do so *politically*, that is, *as citizens of the state* and *not* as members of a particular church congregation or denomination. This is where an understanding of *differentiated responsibility*, or what Abraham Kuyper describes as *sphere sovereignty*, needs to be brought to bear. That said, however, I believe churches as institutions have a role to play, primarily in disseminating an understanding of the principles by which particular military actions are to be evaluated. This is what successive CRC synods have done over the decades. It would be improper to expect more from them.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont., and earnestly prays that war in Iraq might yet be averted.

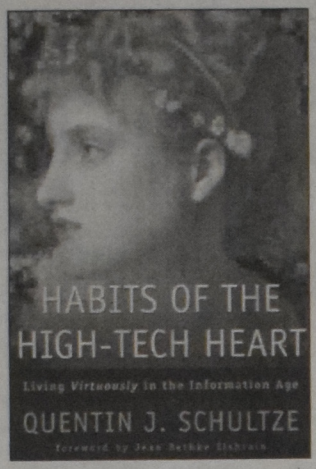
Media/Agriculture

'Are we becoming high-tech fools?' asks Quentin Schultze

Abe Huyser-Honig

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The naïve assumption that technical advances ensure human progress is as old as the tower of Babel, but in the so-called information age it's one that Christians need to be more wary of than ever, says Dr. Quentin Schultze, a Calvin College professor and a widely-quoted expert in communications.

Thinking critically about the role of technology in our lives is the central focus of his new book *Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age*, which he summarized in a recent speech during The January Series (an annual event that brings experts from numerous fields to speak at Calvin College).



Faster, bigger are better

High-tech culture assumes making Internet connections faster, hard drives bigger, and cell phones smaller will automatically make the world better. But "as the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Denver puts it, a fool with tools is still a fool," Schultze said. "If we do not spend as much time cultivating virtue among us … as we do chasing after the latest information technologies, we shall all become high-tech fools."

The proliferation of personal computers, the Internet, and cell phones has been accompanied by the proliferation of a high-tech worldview that is deceived at best and downright harmful at its worst, said Schultze. He writes in *Habits of the High-Tech Heart* that catchphrases like "a computer in every classroom" and "digital democracy" are "empty rhetoric." In his speech he cited a Michigan law passed last year creating a "cyber-court" as a prime example. Devoid of any guidelines for actually putting such a court into practice, the bill represented a mere mirage of progress that was not carried out in reality. More troubling, while the bill's promoters gushed about advances in speed and connection, the advancement of justice — a court's fundamental purpose — was not even mentioned.

Downright delusional

And the expectations of some technology enthusiasts seem downright delusional. For example, said Schultze, the prominent tech enthusiast George Gilder has written that through the World Wide Web society can achieve nothing less than "transfiguration." The dot-com bust, the litter of outdated PCs and video game systems adorning the curb each year, and the fact that businesses abandon more than 40 per cent of information technology projects before they're finished show such hopes are unwarranted. "Given what is now occurring in cyberspace — dishonesty, incivility, immorality, and foolishness of all kinds… progress is more hope than reality," Schultze writes in *Habits*.

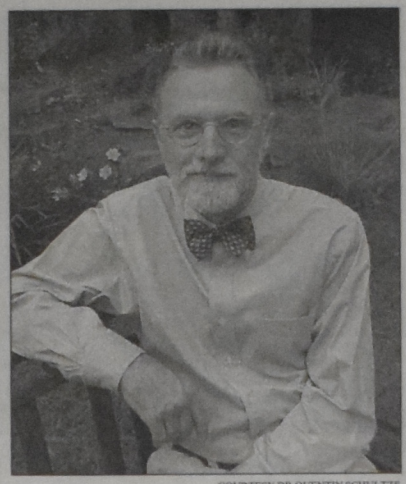
Info-tech 'ethic' erodes morality

Worse than creating false hopes, the info-tech "ethic" erodes morality. "Cyber-culture is so focused on the here and now that it implicitly rejects the human need for a long term vision, let alone a moral compass," he writes. "As a quasi-religion, [it] preaches the *is* over the *ought*."

With such a concentrated focus on what we can do, cyber-culture rarely pauses to ask what we should do. Mesmerized by the ways they can manipulate digitized financial records, CEOs don't question whether or not they should. Enchanted by the ability to talk with anyone anywhere, cell phone users forget about basic courtesy and responsibility towards neighbors in their immediate physical environment. "Like ethical chameleons, we adapt our moral practices to the latest technologies rather than summoning our technologies to follow a long-term moral vision," writes Schultze.

Given his strongly negative view, one might conclude that Schultze's cure for our high tech ills would be to simply chuck the cell phone, the TV, and the family PC in the trash. What about all the good things technology enables — e-mail keeping missionaries and home offices in closer contact, databases helping law enforcement agencies across the nation keep tabs on sex offenders and suspected terrorists, pagers alerting doctors to emergencies? Schultze said there isn't one correct response. For people like farmer/poet Wendell Berry, life without the Internet may still be the right way to go, but for many technology can be a gift from God.

The important thing is that we adapt our use of technology to the moral wisdom we learn from Christian teaching, instead of adopting cyber- culture's values along with its tools. Rather than looking to efficiency, speed and database size, we need to guide our use — or rejection — of technology by the time- tested virtues of discernment, moderation, wisdom, humility, authenticity, and diversity.



COURTESY DR QUENTIN SCHULTZE

Dr. Quentin Schultze

An end in itself

For example, cyber-culture sees the accumulation and availability of information as an end in itself. But "being wise is far more than being informed," said Schultze. Though technology allows us to consume vast amounts of information every day, due to its overwhelming volume and often superficial nature we are still "largely incapable of dialoguing wisely about real technology, such as the role of database deception in the so-called New Economy … or the aesthetic and spiritual shape of PowerPoint driven worship." The information age's preoccupation with the latest thing results in a profound ignorance of tradition — which according to Schultze is the cornerstone of true wisdom.

A virtuous approach to information technology also calls for moderation in the face of cyber-culture's mantra of faster, bigger, and more, said Schultze. He cited a cell phone ad promising 10,000 minutes per month for only $54.99 (U.S.). "Not a bad deal!" he said. "But think about it … who in the world needs 166 hours of cell time every month?" Similarly, by itself the fact that computer processors are constantly getting faster does not necessarily mean that the world is getting any better, he said. "Is it virtuous to be a fool who computes twice as fast?"

In the end, Schultze concluded, technology can certainly be a blessing. But if we mindlessly adopt the cyber-culture values that accompany it, information technology can also become a curse. "Perhaps," he writes in *Habits of the High-Tech Heart*, "the most important questions should be whether our cyber-practices are making us better persons and our society more civil and democratic."

Internet helps marketing the farm rather than farming the market

Elbert van Donkersgoed

Fred Kirschenmann believes that a growing segment of the consuming public is signaling that they want to know where their food comes from, how it is produced, how the animals were treated and whether or not the food was produced using good environmental stewardship. Kirschenmann sees this as an opportunity for an alternative vision for independent, moderate-sized farmers.

When Kirschenmannn spoke to the Christian Farmers Federation convention, he warned that food markets are no longer simply getting larger; they are becoming concentrated. In turn, food processors, manufacturers and suppliers of all kinds also concentrate into fewer firms to supply the retail giants with mass-produced, uniform supplies at low margins. And farmers, in turn, continue to feel pressure to produce the raw materials of food in specialized, uniform, mass quantities at further reduced prices.

Alternative vision for agriculture

This phenomenon is not new! For each dollar spent on food the share that is received by the American farmer has dropped from 44 per cent in 1910 to nine per cent in recent years.

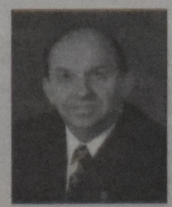
Kirschenmann traveled from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Iowa to share his alternative vision for agriculture — a vision that emphasizes marketing the farm rather than farming the market.

In his view the present centralized food system is increasingly trying to dictate market demand, rather than simply creating it. Farmers have been sidelined into a passive role — suppliers of raw materials to which others can add substantive value.

But he believes a fundamental shift is underway in the way we communicate with one another. Thanks to the Internet, we have moved beyond a broadcast era to a conversation era. He sees the end of broadcasting information to prospective buyers through high powered media campaigns, aimed at getting people to buy food products. These marketing strategies were designed to keep people from knowing what went on in the production and processing of food: they focused entirely on convincing people to buy the end product. Consumers were treated as passive objects.

For Kirschenmann, the food buyer can now experience the world as a set of intimate conversations, as opposed to a billboard of slogans. Today, one can have an informed conversation about anything with almost anyone.

Food shoppers, too, will want conversations about the food they buy. Where was it produced? Who grew it? How were the animals treated? What was the impact on the environment? Marketing as conversation creates new opportunities in the food system. Offering consumers a relationship to a farm is value added. Marketing the farm is an important part of Kirschenmann's vision for an alternative agriculture.



Elbert van Donkersgoed is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario.

Church

Minority churches in Bulgaria fear restrictions under new law

Jonathan Luxmoore

WARSAW, Poland (ENI) — Minority churches in Bulgaria have condemned a new law penalizing unregistered religious activity and giving special status to the predominant Orthodox church under Patriarch Maxim.

No one listened

"We're astonished this law was adopted so quickly, and that no one listened to our voices," said Theodor Angelov, Bulgarian general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, which is based in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital.

The law stipulates that the Orthodox church is the country's "traditional church" and quotes church law describing Orthodoxy as the "only true apostolic catholic church since the time of Christ."

"If the Orthodox church is elevated over the others and treated differently, this will create problems," Angelov told ENI.

OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Patriarch Maxim of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

The law, which came into force at the beginning of this year, allows courts to bar church activities for up to six months, as well as to cancel their registration and ban their publications.

Although all 30 denominations currently established in Bulgaria are expected to be re-registered, minority denominations fear that they may face discrimination in the future.

The law would make it "very difficult" for new religious communities to be registered, Angelov said.

The law also denies recognition to a breakaway Orthodox synod which separated from Patriarch Maxim in 1996.

Move could trigger violent conflict

The state prosecutor has been charged with returning all churches and monasteries controlled by the breakaway synod to Patriarch Maxim's church — a move Angelov said could trigger violent conflict.

"It's clear that parliamentarians want to end the Orthodox division and bring people together," Angelov told ENI. "But this is another wrong step. You can't govern the faith and beliefs of people with laws and political moves."

Protestants are supporting a challenge to the law in Bulgaria's Constitutional Tribunal, and believe the issue might need to be raised at the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, said Angelov.

Meanwhile, the vicar-general of the Greek Catholic church's Sofia-based administration, Blagovest Vanghelov, said the law would "alter the status of all religious communities."

"We all have virtually the same objections — Catholics, Protestants and Muslims — and have made our views clear in a series of petitions," Vanghelov told ENI.

"As Catholics, we've nothing against describing the Orthodox church as traditional here, since this is just. But it's clearly a contradiction to separate church and state on one hand, and to say which part of the church is the true one in a religious law on the other."

Orthodox Christians make up 83.6 per cent of Bulgaria's 7.9 million inhabitants, according to a 2001 National Statistics Institute survey, with Muslims comprising 12.1 per cent and Protestants and Roman Catholics 2.5 per cent.

In U.S. survey, evangelical pastors predict growth, mainline clergy less sure

PHOENIX, Ariz. (EP) — A nationwide survey in the U.S. reveals that a majority of Protestant pastors predict that the influence of Christianity in America will decrease over the next 10 years. The study, by Ellison Research of Phoenix, showed that many pastors think there will be a corresponding increase in the influence of non-Christian religions and "New Age" spirituality.

Baptist and Lutheran clergy tended to be the most pessimistic about Christianity's influence, while Pentecostal and charismatic pastors tended to be more optimistic about the next decade.

The survey polled 567 Protestant pastors about their expectations concerning the Christian faith in America a decade from now. While pastors were widely split over how different things will be in the church in the year 2012, 82 per cent agreed that "the influence of non-Christian religions in the U.S." would increase in the coming decade. Only five per cent thought there would be a decrease in non-Christian influences, and 13 per cent said they did not expect things to be much different 10 years hence.

Increase in New Age

Similarly, 55 per cent of all ministers said they believe there will be an increase in "influence of 'New Age' spirituality in the U.S." Evangelical pastors in general were far more likely to predict an increase in New Age spirituality — 59 per cent, compared to just 34 per cent of pastors from mainline denominations. Younger ministers were also more likely to foresee an increase in New Age influence (71 per cent of pastors under the age of 45, compared to 51 per cent of those age 45 to 59, and 42 per cent of older ministers).

Pastors were most pessimistic when asked about the future of freedom of religion in the U.S. Ten per cent predicted that freedom would increase and 46 per cent said it would stay the same as today. However, 44 per cent predicted declining freedom of religion in America over the next decade. Evangelical pastors were particularly pessimistic, while most mainline clergy expressed no great expectation of substantive change.

Most Protestant clergy were not optimistic about "the influence of Christianity in Americans' daily lives." Forty-one per cent said they believe such influence will decrease, while 33 per cent thought it would stay the same. Only 26 per cent predicted that the Christian faith would influence Americans more in 2012 than it does today.

As to the future of churches in America, 33 per cent of all ministers predicted an increase in "the proportion of Americans who attend a Christian church" while 44 per cent predicted that there would be a decline. Baptists and Lutherans were the groups most likely to anticipate a decrease in church attendance, while Pentecostals were more likely than other groups to predict that attendance would rise over the next decade.

While the predictions on church attendance by a high percentage of pastors were not encouraging, 35 per cent still thought the number of Christian churches in the U.S. would increase over the next 10 years. But the same percentage predicted a decrease. Pentecostals pastors were the most likely to be optimistic, with nearly half predicting an increase in the number of Christian churches.

Vast difference in optimism

However, there was a vast difference in optimism between mainline and evangelical clergy. Among mainline pastors, only 26 per cent said they thought their denominations would grow, while 44 per cent predicted a decline. Among evangelical ministers there existed an overall sense of optimism, with 48 per cent predicting denominational growth, and only 27 per cent projecting a decline in their respective denominations.

The Ellison researchers noted that churches which are part of the National Association of Evangelicals — which represents the majority of evangelical denominations — were particularly optimistic, with 70 per cent predicting growth and just 14 per cent projecting a decline. Pentecostal and charismatic pastors were particularly excited about the future, with 80 per cent predicting that their denominations and fellowships would grow.

By contrast ministers from denominations in the mainline National Council of Churches were far more pessimistic, with just 20 per cent predicting growth and 54 per cent expecting decreases. Methodist (22 per cent predicting growth, 49 per cent a decline) and Lutheran (25 per cent for growth, 39 per cent for decline) were the most pessimistic about future attendance in their denominations.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research and director of the study, noted that those pastors who were the most optimistic may want to take a closer look at national trends. "Study after study reveals no real increase in church attendance, Bible readership, or Christian belief in the U.S. for many decades," Sellers said. "It's understandable that evangelicals tend to expect growth in their denomination, while mainline ministers often anticipate decline, because that is a continuation of well-established trends. But the pastors who predict overall increased church attendance or more Christian influence in people's lives are apparently expecting the start of something new — something that, by all available measurements, isn't currently happening in the U.S. and hasn't happened for many years."

Secret document outlines anti-church campaign

CHINA (Compass) — A confidential document entitled "Work Plan of the Baoding Municipal Public Security Bureau to Prohibit Christian Illegal Activities" calls for specific action against unregistered house church Christians in Hebei province in the months leading up to the Communist Party Congress in November last year. The document states the aim of the repressive campaign, "to protect legal [religious activities] and to prohibit illegal ones; to resist infiltration and to strike down criminal acts and to ruthlessly strike down all cult activities masquerading under the banner of Christianity."

The campaign was carefully coordinated by a special leadership team headed by Li Yunlong, Head of the Public Security Bureau. The incident, say China watchers, provides proof of continuing action taken at the official level against unregistered house churches and shows Party and government are capable of mounting co-ordinated campaigns against house-church Christians.

Church

More ethnic cleansing carried out by Sudan

KHARTOUM, Sudan (EP) — Christian Solidarity International (CSI) has charged the government of Sudan with resuming "ethnic cleansing" of the native population of oil-rich areas of the country. According to the anti-slavery organization, government troops from the Muslim-controlled north started a military operation that attacked civilian settlements in the vicinity of the Talisman and Lundin oil installations in western Upper Nile.

CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL

CSI's Dr. John Eibner with Deng Akech, a liberated slave boy.

Several villages destroyed

A CSI source confirmed that the government military offensive involving approximately 1,500 ground troops destroyed several villages in Leer and Mayom counties. In Lare, government troops burnt the facilities of the World Food Program and MSF-Holland, non-profit groups that offer aid to impoverished Sudanese.

CSI estimates that tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced from their homes and are without food and shelter. Local officials are still trying to determine the number of dead, wounded, and missing civilians.

Thousands abducted

Some of the wounded have been evacuated by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Since last June, thousands of women and children have been abducted by government soldiers from western Upper Nile and transferred to government-controlled areas.

Bush condemned Sudan's government

In October, President George Bush condemned the government of Sudan for acts of genocide in and around the Talisman and Ludin oil areas.

CSI is appealing to the American government to facilitate the delivery of emergency aid to the displaced, and to condemn publicly this latest wave of ethnic cleansing. So far the U.S. State Department has not issued a statement on these latest violations of the current U.S.-brokered ceasefire between Sudan and the SPLM/A, the rebel faction from the south. An American-led civil protection monitoring team is in Sudan, but, according to CSI, it has not yet responded to requests from the rebels to send investigators to witness the attacks.

The Islamic government headquartered in Khartoum is fighting a declared jihad to subjugate the black, non-Muslim population of southern Sudan. At least two million people, mostly black non-Muslims, have died since fighting began 20 years ago. Just before the latest military offensive began, Sudanese president Gen. Omar al-Bashir was quoted by Reuters News Service as saying that "peace will come by the gun, if it cannot come by dialogue."

Religious violence leads to death, displacement in Nigeria

Obed Minchakpu

JOS, Nigeria (Compass) — Seven persons died and five others suffered injuries in a clash between Muslim nomads and Christian peasant farmers in Dalwa and Molai, villages in the state of Borno in northern Nigeria. The December 13 violence also resulted in the destruction of houses, food, cash crops and cattle.

Azubuko Udah, Borno state police commissioner, said that deep-seated religious tension triggered the disturbance.

Religious hatred now a common feature

"Religious hatred has now become a common feature within our country's communities," Udah told Compass in Maiduguri. "Every little misunderstanding is now seen in the light of religion. This has largely contributed to the numerous religious crises that we have witnessed in the country."

According to Udah, Muslim Fulani nomads allowed their cattle to stray into the fields of Christian farmers, destroying their crops. "This triggered the religious tension that had already been building up between the two communities," the commissioner said.

Borno police are keeping watch over the area to curtail the spread of violence. Nevertheless, hundreds of Christians from the area have fled to other parts of the state for fear of Muslim retaliation.

Meanwhile, 450 people are presently standing trial in various courts in the city of Jos, Plateau state, on charges stemming from religious disturbances. Plateau Governor Joshua Dariye set up a committee with representatives from the ministry of justice, the judiciary and police departments to ensure that justice is not "delayed, denied or miscarried" in the pending cases.

Dariye said that more than 60 peace meetings have taken place between government officials and Muslim and Christian leaders in an effort to find a durable solution to the religious conflict, but so far nothing has succeeded.

Religious conflict across Nigeria has forced nearly a quarter million people into refugee camps, according to Igna Gabriel, Nigeria's Federal Commissioner for Refugees. He also said that Muslim-Christian clashes have also forced some 26,000 Nigerians to flee to the neighboring Republic of Cameroon.

Gabriel appealed for support to enable the commission to meet the needs of the displaced.

The refugee commission needs about $50 million for humanitarian assistance to the country's internal refugees, he said, the majority of whom are Christians. Refugee care has become a Herculean task because the United Nations Refugee Commission has withdrawn contributions for food and medical care.

Police kill four Christians, injure eight

NIGERIA (Compass) — On December 14, officers from the Nigeria federal police force killed four Catholic Christians and injured eight others as the group was returning home on a bus from a crusade and all-night prayer vigil. Charity Chukwu, 18, one of the passengers who managed to escape, said that police stopped the vehicle carrying the group to Enugu and demanded a bribe.

"The bus driver refused to offer the bribe because he was a Christian," she said. "(The police) shot him point-blank and he died instantly." When members of the group tried to calm the policemen, they were also shot dead. The rest fled on foot.

Appalled by the killings, Enugu governor Chinwoke Mbadinuju ordered federal police units to withdraw from the state and threatened to resign if the federal government does nothing to address the misuse of weapons by security forces. The killers are presumed to be members of a federal anti-riot squad.

Dutch theologians urge Protestants to share Eucharist

Andreas Havinga

AMSTERDAM (ENI) — In the face of the increasing disregard by Dutch Roman Catholics and Protestants of church rules that prohibit inter-communion, a group of Dutch theologians is calling on Protestant churches to renounce their historic condemnation of the Catholic Eucharist.

The theologians, from a group called the Ecumenical Polder Circle, hope that such a move by the Protestant churches might spur the Roman Catholic Church to follow suit.

Small but significant

Though small — four Catholics and four Protestants — the group is considered significant, and includes Ruud Huysmans, a Roman Catholic professor of Canon Law, who is a former president of the Council of Churches in the Netherlands.

The Catholic Church officially forbids its members from taking Holy Communion in Protestant churches, and Vatican rules also prevent Protestants officially receiving Holy Communion in Catholic churches, positions often reaffirmed by Catholic leaders.

THIRD BATTALION THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT REGIMENTAL AND COMRADES SITE

Princess Juliana

But in many parishes and congregations in the Netherlands, Protestants and Catholics are ignoring such rules and practising inter-communion by sharing the Eucharist.

One of the most celebrated cases of inter-communion was in 1998 when Dutch Prince Maurits, a Protestant, married a Catholic. At the televised wedding service, a number of Protestants — including Queen Beatrix's mother, Princess Juliana — took holy communion from a Catholic priest, leading to complaints from Catholic leaders.

Although in practice the Protestant churches are relaxed about inter-communion, the theologians argue that a formal declaration of this sort would have great symbolic value.

The Heidelberg Catechism of 1562, one of the best known of the Reformed confessions of faith, describes the Catholic Eucharist as an "idolatry."

In a letter to the joint synod of the Protestant churches, the theologians said that the official recognition of the Catholic Eucharist would be an "important ecumenical step forward."

Islam

Facing Islam: With the sword of the Word and love of the Lord

John van Dyk

The quiet construction of mosques in various urban locations throughout North America over the last 15 to 20 years is a strong indicator that the followers of Mohammed have begun to settle into this continent. Osama Bin Laden's explosive impact on September 11, 2001 leaves no doubt that the social/political/religious climate in North America had changed catastrophically — and that "forever," as some commentators ominously state.

The question for Christians is how does one respond to what has happened? For some, fear has become the ruling emotion. Suspicion of Middle Eastern people living in our neighborhoods, working in local variety stores, and walking the streets has been met with some discomfort and perhaps underlying ill will. The enemy, or so it seems, is among us.

Islam: Our New Neighbor

To help Reformed Christians gain some much-needed perspective on the changing climate in the land, the Burlington Study Centre in Southern Ontario organized this year's annual conference around the subject of *Islam: Our New Neighbor*.

The conference, which involved two evening sessions, was led by Rev. Viktor Attallah, an Egyptian-born, Coptic-raised Christian, who became a Reformed believer. Educated at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, he is now the executive director of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF), working out of Cyprus. MERF receives funding and support from various Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

The message Rev. Attallah shared with his audience of close to 500 on both Thursday and Friday evenings was a simple one: do not fear; the Lord has his purpose in all that has happened, and we have a great opportunity to share the Gospel message with our Muslim neighbors.

Attallah, who studied under the tutelage of Dr. Cornelius Van Til, said that, as his well-known professor used to say, it is important that we be able to read God's thoughts after him. What this means, said Attallah, is that we need to see that God is in control, that he has a purpose for all that happens in history, and that we have to understand the opportunities provided to God's people for the sake of the Kingdom.

Tracing the roots of Islam back to the birth of Ishmael, son of Abraham via Sarah's Egyptian maidservant Hagar, Attallah reminded his audience that God's plan included the making of Ishmael's seed into a great nation (Genesis 21: 18).

COURTESY JOHN VAN DYK

Rev. Viktor Attallah meets a conference participant.

"We need for someone younger than I to write the history of Islam," said Attallah, "to show how Islam is an instrument in God's hands."

Offering some needed perspective, Attallah cautioned his audience to not think of Muslims as a formidable enemy or as monsters that even God can not convert. "They are children of Abraham. They are God's children who need to be converted."

Attallah said that the movement of Muslims to North America should be seen in positive terms, not negative. "Never in the history of Islam has there been an opportunity for you to reach Muslims, both for them to have freedom and for them to be free to convert," a condition clearly not open to them in many of the Muslim dominated countries of their origin.

Avoid past mistakes

Yet, Attallah cautioned his audience to avoid the mistakes that he said have been made by evangelicals in their approach to Muslims over the last 100 years. One mistake to avoid is to take a polemical approach to Muslims — one that counters Muslim attacks on our beliefs and faith by attacking their leader Mohammed and by attacking the Koran — "do that and they will not listen to you," he warned.

"We need to also avoid using technical terms such as justification by faith, because it doesn't mean anything to them," said Attallah. "The message of the gospel is powerful, but sometimes we are an obstacle in proclaiming it to others."

The other error is to use a contextual approach as a means to converting Muslims. Contextualization, which evolved in the 1970s and '80s, was seen as the formula to convert Muslims. In practice it meant avoiding subjects that might be offensive to Muslims, such as talking about baptism, the Trinity, the use of wine in the Lord's Supper — anything that might offend them was off limits.

Don't soft-pedal the gospel

Muslims, however, prefer a direct approach, said Attallah. "Muslims want you to be honest and straightforward with them. If you are being phony they will figure it out. You cannot soft-pedal the gospel."

The key to reaching out to Muslims, Attallah said, is a simple formula. "You know how you are going to get the Muslim to follow you? It is love. And that means you are going to have to get close to them," he said.

"It takes time to make friends with them. But most times when Muslims become friendly with you, a lot of their questions go away."

Fear is a hindrance

A hindrance to developing relationships and reaching out to Muslims, said Attallah, is the attitude of fear. "If we think the Muslims are out there to get us, then we won't do it. We won't develop friendships."

We need to look at it a different way, said Attallah. "The Muslims aren't out there to get us. The Muslims are out there for us to get them." And the way to get them is by means of friendship evangelism.

"Just befriend them as regular people. Include them in your regular circle of friends. Let them see how you live; your lifestyle, your values. Show them that you are serious about your relationship with God, and that you are not fanatical about it."

Attallah also urged patience. "Lead them a little dose at a time. Don't be in a hurry. In the West everyone is in a hurry. But we have to develop patience. Long-term relationships take time."

Contrary to what we might believe, Attallah said; the vast majority of Muslims don't know a great deal about their religion. He also described Muslims in the practice of their religion as equivalent to the Pharisees.

"They view the commands of Allah as the Pharisees did. You can learn a lot about dealing with Muslims in the way Jesus deals with the Pharisees," he said, adding the caution: "But don't assume that you are Jesus. View yourself instead as one of his disciples."

Different meanings

Attallah also cautioned about the use of terms Christians and Muslims share but which have different meanings.

"Faith to Muslims means accepting the teaching that there is only one God and Mohammed is his prophet. To us, faith is a result of the working of God's Spirit, of the grace of God in our lives."

Prayers to Muslims mean calling on God. "It is a ceremony. They use prescribed words which follow prescribed actions — kneeling facing towards Mecca — it's equivalent to the Catholic practice of formalism and ritual," Attallah explained. "Muslims need to know that our relationship to God is not ritualistic."

Heaven is another term that is different in the Muslim faith. "It is a man's world," Attallah said, "where beautiful women are in service to men, and a magical place where fruit is in abundance, and, while eaten, is never consumed.

Threats to Islam

Attallah said the greatest threats to the Islamic religion come from the Reformed faith, whose world and life view is similar to that of Islam (all aspects of life are governed by our faith), and from the spread of information technology, which makes choices available to Muslims in lands where freedom to choose one's religion is severely limited.

Another threat is internal. Muslims who speak out against the contradictions in the Koran. Attallah said that if the Koran was exposed to even half of the higher criticism that the Bible has been exposed to, it would not stand.

Following the lecture on Friday evening, questions were fielded from the audience, during which time Attallah made a number of points:

- the picture of massive conversions of Westerners to Islam after 9/11 was greatly exaggerated by the media;
- the word jihad means struggle. "It is meant to be a defensive term; not an offensive term;
- his own experience growing up in Egypt was not one of forced conversion to Islam; there is a Christian minority in the Middle East, and a growing number of Christians are excited about reaching out to Muslims; of that growing minority of Christians many are of the Reformed faith;
- Islam is not one entity. Muslims, said Attallah, are greatly divided; the only time they appear united is when they are under attack;
- Most Muslims don't understand the Koran; it is chanted and recited, but not necessarily understood.

Cure might be worse than disease

In response to a final question from moderator Dr. Cornelis Van Dam, who asked what should President George Bush do in regard to Iraq, Attallah suggested that Christians and leaders of nations should look to see what God is doing in history.

Though reluctant to enter the debate for or against war, Attallah questioned the U.S.'s geopolitical agenda and suggested that just war conditions were not being met so far in this case. He also suggested that the cure might be worse than the disease — a destabilized Iraq, which could result in mass murder by the various factions vying for control in a country without Saddam Hussein. Attallah also stated that Saddam has been kind to the Christian community in Iraq, allowing more freedom of religion in the country than Saudi Arabia.

Asking his audience, "Is God in control? Can God overturn Saudi Arabia overnight?" and receiving a loud "Yes", Attallah said that God can do it but that "he operates by his gentle sovereign power working in the lives of his people."

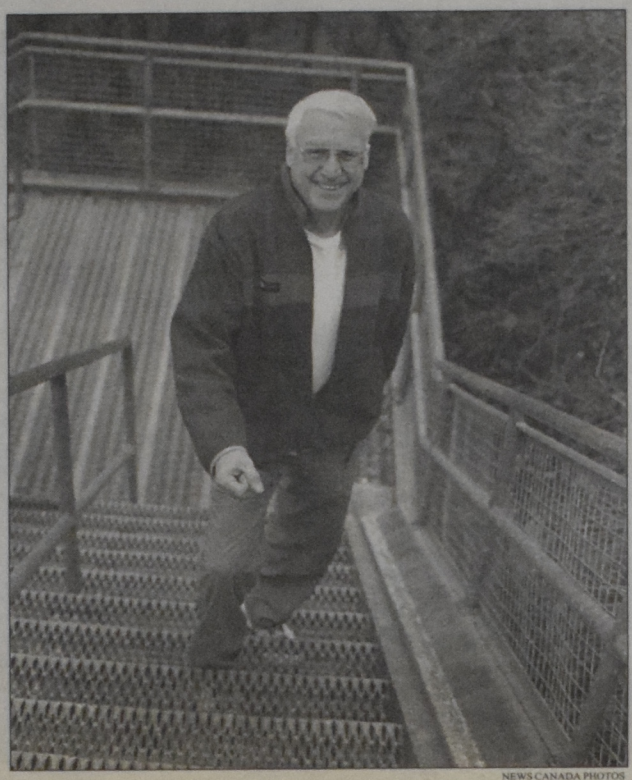
"Governments do not see beyond their noses. See what God is doing in history," said Attallah. "God is calling us to the harvest. We shouldn't be distracted by the agenda of this world."

***This report courtesy of John van Dyk, editor of* Christian Renewal; *it appeared in Nov. 25, 2002 issue. For more information about MERF, see:* http:www.gospelcom.net/woh/merf**

Seniors

Is your aging parent managing at home?

Poor balance, poor walking endurance and difficulty negotiating stairs within the home are things to watch out for in aging parents.



NEWS CANADA PHOTOS

Lisa M. Petsche

It's often a difficult determination to make: is your aging parent managing adequately on his or her own, or does he or she (the latter will be used from here on) need some kind of assistance?

No matter how difficult it may to be to look after their day-to-day needs, many frail seniors are reluctant to ask for or accept help, regarding it as an admission of incompetence or an invasion of their privacy. They may also fear being forced into institutional care. Out of anxiety or pride, they often try to conceal any difficulties they're experiencing as a result of physical or mental decline.

Following are some indicators that your parent is unable to independently handle all of the activities of daily living.

Grooming

- Changes in appearance, such as dirty or unkempt hair, ragged fingernails, decaying teeth;
- Mismatched or soiled clothing;
- Body odor.

Nutrition

- Noticeable weight loss;
- Complaints of poor appetite, or loose-fitting dentures;
- Insufficiently or inappropriately stocked refrigerator and pantry;
- Expired or rotting food in refrigerator.

Housekeeping

- Dirty dishes or laundry piled up;
- Accumulation of garbage;
- Excessive dirt or clutter;
- Unsanitary conditions, especially in the kitchen or bathroom.

Finances

- Accumulation of unopened mail, especially bills;
- Major credit card debt or large, inexplicable bank account withdrawals;
- Bounced cheques;
- Inability to perform basic banking transactions, including writing a cheque.

Medication

- Non-compliance with medication regimes – look for prescriptions that haven't been filled, and unused or expired containers of medicine;
- Lack of an organized system for managing medications;
- Prescriptions filled by a variety of pharmacies.

Mobility

- Difficulty going from a sitting to a standing position;
- Poor balance;
- Poor walking endurance;
- Difficulty negotiating stairs within the home;
- Inability to safely access the community via walking, driving or public transit.

Safety

- Recent falls — be on the lookout for bruises or limping;
- Cluttered walkways or stairwells;
- Accidents with household appliances.

Energy Level

- Lethargy;
- Social withdrawal.

Mental Status

- Poor short-term memory;
- Confusion;
- Inability to carry out familiar routines or follow instructions;
- Poor judgment stemming from lack of insight into needs and limitations;
- Suspiciousness.

Getting help

If you have siblings in the area, set up a family meeting to discuss your parent's needs, what kind of assistance each of you can provide and how often. Following are some ways to help, depending on your parent's situation.

- Arrange for a medical check-up and accompany your parent. Lethargy, forgetfulness or confusion could be caused by reversible conditions such as infection, malnutrition, dehydration or depression. Request a medication review by her family doctor or pharmacist, since side effects, overmedication or drug interactions might be at the root of difficulties. Ask the pharmacist about available aids for organizing and remembering to take medications, such as logs, compartmentalized pill boxes, special blister packs and portable alarm systems. Ensure all prescriptions are filled at one pharmacy.
- If nutrition is an issue, arrange a dental appointment to have your parent's teeth or dentures checked; set up a schedule to take her grocery shopping; stock the freezer with heat-and-serve foods; take turns having her over for dinner on a regular basis; and arrange for nutritional supplements if necessary (consult the doctor or a dietitian first).
- If vision is a problem, ask your parent's doctor for a referral to an ophthalmologist. If nothing can be done to improve her vision, get her a magnifier for reading small print, and consider other adaptive items such as large-keypad telephones and clocks with oversized numbers. List important phone numbers on a posterboard (use black lettering on white), and place it on the wall by her phone.
- If falls are a concern, perform a safety assessment of the home environment to identify potential hazards — for example, clutter, throw rugs that don't stay in place, poor lighting, lack of proper stair railings — and do what you can to rectify them. Visit a medical supply store and check out the many products that might make daily activities easier and safer.
- If financial management is an issue, talk to your parent about assigning power of attorney for property to one or more trusted family members, and consult a lawyer. Arrange for direct deposit of pension checks and automatic bill payment from her bank account. If necessary, have mail redirected to your home.

Investigate local resources

- Investigate available resources in your parent's community, which might include: personal emergency response systems; letter carrier or utility company alert services; telephone reassurance services; grocery delivery services; meals on wheels; volunteer driver programs; accessible transportation; therapeutic day programs; recreational programs; outreach services such as foot care and seniors' dental clinics; home health services involving personal care, homemaking, nursing, dietary consultation, physical and occupational therapy and social work; and seniors' housing. Such information can be obtained from the local Community Care Access Centre (CCAC).

If your parent needs more help than community programs can provide and the cost of private-pay services is prohibitive, find out about residential care alternatives.

Least intrusive options

If your parent is resistant to the idea of outside assistance, start by trying to interest her in one of the least intrusive options, such as obtaining a personal emergency response system, making minor home adaptations or using a grocery delivery service.

Stress that your aim is to help her remain at home with optimal quality of life. If she won't accept help for her own sake, ask her to consider it in order to give you and your siblings peace of mind. She may be more receptive to certain suggestions if they come from someone outside the family, such as a health care professional or trusted friend.

Even if your parent appears to be managing sufficiently at present, it's a good idea, especially if she has any chronic illnesses, to start learning about resources in the community that might be of future value. This can help to avert a crisis, and if one does arise, you'll be ready to assist her in making informed decisions and necessary arrangements.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker specializing in geriatrics, as well as a freelance writer.

Smoking

Kicking the butt habit

Ron De Boer

All right, it's time to fess up. I have been a closet smoker my entire life.

There, I said it. I apologize to my high school basketball coach, Brian Doornenbol, who asked me one time after practice. I lied. It's 20 years later, and I'm coming clean.

I blame my habit on Holland where small children go straight from breast milk to cigarettes. Even the dairy cows smoke in Holland! When my forefathers and mothers decided to board a boat and move to Canada a half-century ago, they brought with them sacks of tobacco and racks of pipes, too.

Like many second generation sons and daughters of Dutch immigrants, I had no choice but to be a smoker. If you didn't smoke at young people's coffeehouses in the '70s and early '80s, you weren't invited. Heck, most of the elders and even some of the ministers smoked. It couldn't be that sinful.

My parents' generation had it even worse. I think it was my father who told me he got a pack of smokes on his twelfth birthday. If you were a woman in the 1950s, smoking gave you an air of sophistication. This, of course, was the lie blown into the culture by the tobacco companies. It's pretty amazing neither of my parents smoked when everyone was saying it was okay to smoke. It doesn't say much for me, however, who smoked when everyone was saying it was unhealthy to smoke.

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATIONS (2)

But how could I not grow up to be a smoker having been raised in a Dutch CRC tradition? Although my parents were dead set against puffing, whenever one of them hosted a family birthday party, six or seven ashtrays the size of hub caps were placed strategically around the living room. We'd fall asleep at night to the sweet smell of my aunt's Craven A Menthols; my uncles rolled their own or smoked no-filter Players. In the morning, the ceiling tiles would be yellow and there were nicotine stains on our sandwich bread.

When we came out of church, half the members stood smoking in little circles, discussing the sermon (or the Leafs game from the night before!). When, as a fifteen year-old, I joined the Chatham Church Hockey League, every player — including the coach — smoked a cigarette between periods while the Zamboni flooded the ice.

My first smoking experience came at my grandparents' farm. My brother and a couple of cousins sneaked some pad-and-pen paper out to a field, found the driest grass we could, rolled it into the paper and lit the end with wooden matches we'd swiped from the little dispenser above the wood stove. I can still taste the acrid smoke in the back of my mouth.

We then graduated to real cigarettes. My earliest recollection of smoking an actual cigarette is the time my brother and I sneaked a du Maurier regular filter from my Uncle Gerry's bright red pack one summer during a visit back in the mid-'70s. We hid behind a pine tree in their yard and took turns filling our cheeks with smoke and blowing it out. We didn't inhale, but, boy, we felt cool smoking real cigarettes.

From there we graduated to the cigarette butts left in ashtrays in the local community centre where we were killing time before public skating. There was always an orange filter twisted down over a half-smoked cigarette. You did your best to avoid the filters with lipstick.

Then in grade eight we hit pay dirt. A kid whose parents owned a variety store joined our school. He brought in a pack and sold smokes on the playground for a nickel each.

Now, before you get too upset, you have to remember, this was the 1970s, and attitudes about smoking weren't quite what they are today. Yes, this was a Christian school, too, not the "evil public school system" where even the kindergartners smoked!

When winter hit, we built a huge snow fort. We were like workers on the Tower of Babel on that fort; we rolled snowballs and built six-foot-high walls. Our goal was to build a fortress into which we could retreat at recess and smoke under the noses of our teachers and principal. We would return to math or spelling and smile at each other knowingly. It was all about male bonding.

We built the fort, smoked the cigarettes, and we were never caught…until the following spring when our principal walked the school grounds and found a couple hundred cigarette butts fraying on the wet earth. She put two and two together and confronted us, but like good Christian boys, we denied knowing anything about those cigarette butts.

The principal never pursued it, of course; it was probably in her best interest not to know the truth anyway. The truth about the school's naïve playground supervision would also be unceremoniously cast into the education committee's spotlight. It could have been scandalous, so I imagine a teacher was dispensed after hours, empty coffee can in hand, to collect the butts.

My father once caught my brother and I smoking at the back of the farm. We were huddled in the corner of a field when we heard a tractor come rumbling down the two-track laneway. Wasn't it always like parents to show up just when you were doing something totally forbidden? We stupidly got up and began walking quickly along the fenceline with little robotic footsteps.

He spotted us, of course, searched out the crime scene, found our cigarettes and confronted us in the barn. We admitted it, and he did something that still baffles me today. He thanked us for admitting it and promised us he wouldn't tell our mother. I viewed him a little differently after that day.

In high school, six or seven of us would cram into my buddy's little rusted Mini, those match box sized cars that made VW Beetles seem sprawling in size. We would all light up and fill the car with so much blue smoke our eyes smarted. One day, we heard a knock on our window, and a teacher slowly came into focus when my friend rolled down his window.

We were hiding our smokes between our knees, as the teacher at his leisure asked us all about how the

basketball team was doing and where my friend bought his car. After 10 minutes or so, he walked away. All of our cigarettes had burned down to the filter, and a couple of us even sustained burned fingers. He'd made his point and held certain power over us for the next few days. We knew if we were ever out of line in any way, he'd turn the flashlight on us as if we were cockroaches.

At Dordt College, we got our first taste of American cigarettes. They were harsh, but you got used to them after a while. I smoked Marlboro Lights, which came in these flimsy white packs with a gold seal down the middle. I filled many an ash tray in my small dorm room in the wee hours of the morning writing stories for James Schaap's writing classes. And I'd seen Schaap himself sneaking a smoke between classes; it was part of the writer's persona, wasn't it?

I was never what you'd call a heavy smoker. When I started teaching, I didn't smoke at all during the day. I did not want my students knowing I smoked. When I'd come home from school with a briefcase full of marking, I'd sit and enjoy one or two.

When the kids came along, I refused to smoke in the house, and as they got older, I waited until they were all in bed before I had one or two at night. For the last 10 years or so, I have smoked two cigarettes every night. A doctor once told me if I was only smoking two cigarettes a day I had nothing to worry about health-wise. I'd be worse off living in smog-filled Toronto *not* smoking, he said. It was then that I noticed *his* yellow fingers.

Last year, CBC radio interviewing and talk show legend Peter Gzowski died of smoking-related diseases — bronchitis, emphysema, lung cancer. He smoked heavily and died on a respirator, barely able to breathe, unable to do the thing he's best known for

— talking. What a way to go. Some would argue a 50-year suicide.

I thought about quitting smoking last summer and actually did stop for three days. But then my brother came over one beautiful summer evening. We sat under a shady cherry tree, and I thought, why quit today?

In October, I decided I'd smoked my last cigarette. I'm 37, old enough to know better, as my mother would say, giving me a whack with a wooden spoon. I developed a terrible lung infection — walking pneumonia, it's called — and got that cancer scare I'd been getting since hitting my mid-thirties. Why *not* me? How stupid I would feel knowing I had invited the very thing I fear the most — Cancer — into my house to live with me.

I stopped smoking on October 25. Karen informed me that she'd been praying for an awful lung infection to attack my system to teach me a lesson. She nearly killed me out of love for me. What a wonderful woman. I had that infection for a month! But it did the trick.

When I got better, I missed that nighttime "butt" fiercely. I've had to make a midnight run or two to the local McDonald's to quell my desire to consume something, and I'm now addicted to tea, which I have substituted for cigarettes.

But I feel better. Addiction — even as minor as two smokes a day — is a powerful force. I'll never say I've quit because I haven't truly quit smoking until I've breathed my last in this life. I've stopped. Hopefully for good.

And for the first time since I was in elementary school, my body feels like a temple again. Smoke- and guilt-free.

Longing for lasting peace and justice

Gerald Vandezande, C.M.

Millions of people the world over are profoundly longing for lasting peace and justice for all. Particularly families, children, refugees and other innocent civilians will be defenseless victims as the near-demonic war-machines of ruthless powers get ready to fight for the control of resource-wealthy territories, such as oil-rich Iraq.

Too many political decision-makers and economic power-brokers increasingly rely on military might, even nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, in order to realize their narrow ideological objectives. They are often obsessed with wanting limitless power, driven by greed, profit-maximization and corporate expansion. Though the human suffering and death, social costs, and environmental degradation are enormous, these ideological objectives are foolishly imagined to require, ultimately, all-out war. It is aimed at overpowering certain dictatorial regimes and destroying "evil" powers in idolatrous pursuit of economic, military and political supremacy.

War always an evil, never a good

As former U.S. President Jimmy Carter recently told the world after accepting this year's Nobel Peace Prize: "War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children."

The international report Collateral Damage: The Health And Environmental Costs Of War On Iraq predicts that an invasion of Iraq could lead to a human catastrophe with casualties as high as 250,000 within the first three months. (Toronto Star, Nov. 12)

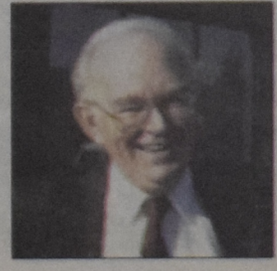
Fear of use of nuclear weapons

Clearly, in the present explosive situation — when even the U.S.A. and the U.K. are prepared to resort to "pre-emptive" nuclear strikes against Iraq — numerous people are deeply fearful of the growing possibility of the actual use of nuclear weapons. These anarchistic actions could lead to a nuclear holocaust and threaten the very existence and survival of the entire human race.

If anything, Canada and other non-aggressive nations should unitedly demand the immediate, effective elimination of these atrocious weapons altogether under strict international surveillance. All warmongers must be stopped now, before it is too late for all of us and the world.

War is a fundamental issue of human conscience and core values. We face basic questions of life and death. The future of humanity hangs in the balance.

May there be justice and peace on earth for all!



Gerald Vandezande is the retired founder and public affairs director of Citizens for Public Justice. He lives in Scarborough, Ont.

Christian Living

Why go to church? 13

To publicly profess the faith

A. A. van Ruler

In the previous article, we began with the deep topics of being united in fellowship with Christ, with the Triune God and with one another. But we concluded that those who truly desire such union will have to summon the courage to enter the institutional church, that is, of a specific organized church. We do that by publicly professing the faith.

In the West, scoring points in a football game is more important than doing profession of faith.

This profession must be fitted into a much broader framework, for it is not just a practical consequence or a by-product of being part of fellowship. It has its own distinct character and deserves to be examined in and of itself.

Its personal nature

The first thing that strikes us about doing public profession of faith is its personal nature. You do it, as it were, wholly as an individual. It has to come from within yourself; you must wish to do it on your own. There should be no element of compulsion.

Not that other factors don't play a role as well – parents and grandparents, girlfriend or boyfriend. Most young people grow up in an environment in which it is expected. It's a way to leave catechism behind; it's part of becoming independent and an adult. Some do so looking ahead to starting their own families and teaching their own children.

But amidst all these influences, a person must also wish to do it himself. Some, indeed, are eager to do profession of faith, especially those who are older and have come to this point out of personal conviction after years of searching. Then it is a very special event for them and for those close to them.

The personal nature of public profession of faith raises important questions about the nature of the church. Can we see the church exclusively in terms of Christ, as if the body grows entirely out of the head? (Hard to picture!) Or, another possibility, can we see the church entirely in terms of the covenant, growing entirely from within, from generation to generation, with infant baptism as its clearest symbol? Or, a third possibility, can we see the church entirely in terms of fellowship and approach it as an expression of the social nature of human beings (and thus also of Christians)?

The latter is how the church is often described nowadays. We assume that there is such a thing as a church, a people of God, and then proceed as if all questions about the nature of the church can be illuminated from this perspective. But this is too easy. Not that I wish to downplay the meaning of these aspects of the church (Christ as head; the covenant as foundation; fellowship as its essence), but we must not lose sight of the individual. The church also consists of individual persons.

Not in the same way as an organization that you can join or not as you like. Nevertheless, you don't become a member of the church automatically. The speaking and willing of God must arouse a response in your heart and will. Predestination, it is true, is the heart of the church. A person is chosen by God, but this is mirrored and realized in our choosing God – all of which happens in the force-field of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is no less essential to the church than Jesus Christ.

Out of world, into church

Alongside the personal nature of profession there is also the public dimension. You profess your faith not just in front of the minister and the council but in front of the entire congregation. Suddenly it's your turn to speak out the content of the faith. It's too bad that this is usually limited to a "Yes" or an "I do." In the ancient church, the individual would recite all the words before the congregation.

But is it done only in the midst of the congregation? I think we ought to go a step further and say that it is in principle being done before all people, in the midst of the world. The names of those doing public profession ought to be published, at least in the church. It would be fitting if they were also published in the newspaper, like births, deaths and weddings. But in the West, scoring points in a football game is more important than doing profession of faith.

It is true that in doing profession of faith, you enter the *ekklesia* (church), you join the people of God called and gathered *out* of the world, *out* of the human race (*ek* in *ekklesia* means *out*). This gives it a somewhat introverted character. You step *out* of the world and *into* the church. You belong here rather than with the others. You experience the life of the church, participate in salvation and you're part of this "pious" group.

TOPHAM PICTUREPOINT

Sometimes it may even be necessary for tactical reasons to keep the faith hidden. Like Bonhoeffer (above), one may do so to protect the holy mysteries of faith from profanation by an arrogant culture determined to strangle the life of the heart.

On the other hand, there is also something extroverted about profession of faith. It is done in public: you stand up for the faith openly and frankly. It is an act of witness. By doing so, you also gesture to others; you say, "Come along and do the same." The church doesn't empty itself in service to the world; it also invites others to come in.

Joining the choir

Besides the personal and the public, we can also distinguish an objective dimension in the public profession of faith. Do I just profess *my* faith or do I profess *the* faith? We must, I'm convinced, begin with the latter – the faith of the church. The church did not just suck it out of her thumb. She received it from the apostles, who derived it from Jesus Christ, in Israel. From age to age the church has preserved and passed on that faith. This is the faith we confess when we do profession of faith, along with the church of all ages. We confess that faith as our own.

The church is a choir that sings in the midst of the world. When I do profession of faith, I join that choir and I sing along. To be sure, this means that my voice reinforces the sound of the choir, but it means even more that I in turn am carried by the song of the choir. Could I stay in tune by myself? In this frightening world, would I even be able to keep on singing by myself?

Finally, doing public profession of faith also involves the matter of church order. By doing profession of faith, you are admitted to the Lord's Supper, at least in Reformed churches. The deepest basis for this practice is that in the sacrament a believer becomes a co-worker with the Triune God. In the sacrament, God is not the only actor but 'man' is also active. He doesn't just experience it passively, he also performs it. God and 'man' celebrate the Lord's Supper together.

This is the big theme of maturity. If we are mature anywhere, it is in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. We can also, of course, affirm that it serves to strengthen a weak faith, but that is a byproduct. The central thing is that the celebration of the Lord's Supper represents the faith at the pinnacle of its strength. There we are full participants along with God.

Be careful about child participation

For this reason, we should be careful about child participation. We may, thereby, lose the benefit of the maturity of the believer and reduce the sacrament to a one-sided affair. It may damage the structure of grace and salvation.

The strange thing is that nowadays many adults want to come to communion like children. They shrink back from doing public profession of faith, refusing to make the choice. They are afraid of that sort of certitude. They do, however, want to take part in the sacrament. Sometimes it seems as if, prompted by chaotic uncertainty, those who speak most loudly about human maturity attend church as immature children.

We do well, I believe, to take a strong stand here as churches of the Reformation and say: first public profession of faith and then admission to the Lord's table. By doing so, we defend the Christian heart of democracy.

Repeating our first love

To do profession of faith we need go to church but once. Still, it isn't wholly a matter of once, for if the liturgy of the worship service is intact, it is repeated in every worship service. Just as, according to Kierkegaard, marriage is a permanent repetition of our first love, so faithful churchgoing is a permanent repetition of our public profession of faith.

Here I am, of course, thinking of the Apostle's Creed as part of the liturgy. A worship service without a recitation of the creed, whether Apostolic or Nicean, is incomplete. And it should be recited or sung, not read, for it is the congregation that is confessing its faith. We must not neglect the opportunity to speak these words aloud and — as mature believers — take these words as our own.

This is another reason we go to church regularly, even if it is just to repeat once again what it is that we believe, what we live and die by. In a previous article we said we go to church to come to the light. This light shines forth in its full glory from the reading of Scripture. But in meditating on that truth, we also want to step into the light ourselves and say the words out loud. That's what we do in reciting the Apostle's Creed. It's worth the trouble to go to church just to do that.

The love song of the bride

What is even better is that we do it together. At most, the minister need only set the rhythm, although we must not forget that he is more than just an office-bearer; he, too, is a believer. But the important thing is that we recite it as a congregation – by heart and standing up to show our active involvement. Then we experience not just the communion of saints with our local congregation but with the church of all ages and of all continents. We do something similar when we stand up to sing or to say the Lord's Prayer together.

We say the creed out loud and in unison. And we also say it from the heart, with an inner joy, reminding ourselves: this is what I believe, this is what we all believe.

The confession, the dogma of the church, is not a wall raised by the clergy to keep out the masses. It is the love song of the bride. She wants to sing it spontaneously out of love for her betrothed. We are not forced to join in; anyone who wishes may refuse to join in the festivities.

Public confession does pose a formidable difficulty. What words shall we use to confess the faith? We can hardly expect the minister to compose a new statement every week. Nor can we allow every member to make up his own

confession. Confession is a matter of community. It is also a matter of tradition. We don't only confess with the church of all places but also with the church of all ages. What better than the words of the Apostle's Creed?

Some people have problems with parts of the creed, such as the virgin birth and the descent into hell. Anyone who is at all wise will have trouble, not just with parts but with the whole creed, and not just with his reason but with his heart. For to say these things and to believe them and to approach the world from their perspective requires conversion.

Yet, when we have come this far, we must in all honesty admit that in the Apostle's Creed the church has been given a small jewel whose value must not be underestimated. What a sober, succinct statement! What simplicity and clarity! Words that catch the very core of the faith! Anyone who can do better is free to try, of course, but personally I must admit that I've never come across a better statement.

This is because the church is more than the individual, and it is more than the church of the present. The Apostle's Creed isn't called apostolic for nothing: it is mined word for word from the good news proclaimed by the apostles, and it is on this basis that the church stands or falls.

The witness of just going

There is yet another way that the church professes her faith than in the public profession of faith or in the recitation of the creed. Just going to church is a confession of faith. We leave our homes and, on a quiet Sunday morning, set off for church. Every Sunday morning, again and again. The neighbors certainly see us going. The witness of this simple act of going to church is considerable in an age when most people stay home. Most sleep late, putter in their gardens, or in the summer get up early to go to the lake. Anyone who goes to church is old-fashioned. In any case, he is rowing against the stream. But we go to church as we go to the bakery – to buy bread. We go to be fed, unto eternal life.

Even when it was the custom, of course, going to church had a confessional character. We need not go to church out of a sort of nonconformism or by way of protest. There are still places where going to church every Sunday is normal, and it's good to be part of that.

Whether few or many are going makes little difference to the act. There's something strange about churchgoing as such; it expresses in bodily form something of the existential, transcending, boundary-crossing nature of being human, so much so that it draws attention to itself. It is more striking to go to church than to go to work or to a football game.

Those who hurry to go to church on a quiet Sunday morning are a sign of the Mediator, the Triune God and the communion of saints. Especially when the service ends and the people spill out, they make an impression. For a little while, they fill the street like a crowd leaving a football stadium. So churchgoing still displays a popular, mass character.

Being turned inside out

In all we have said so far, the public character has been primary. You don't sneak into church and you don't do profession of faith in secret. The business of the church belongs essentially to that of the kingdom of God. This has been the glory of the Christian church from the beginning. There was never anything mysterious or surreptitious about the church. It never behaved like a secret society for initiates only. It has always been for John Q. Public and has therefore always been close to the public square.

The heart of the matter has, on the other hand, also concerned the most intimate, most incredible of things: speaking along with God. Confessing means speaking with, and speaking means that the human heart is broken open. The real self shows itself. A person is turned inside out; he turns himself inside out.

This is a huge liberation, for the human heart is hard. It is closed. As sinner, 'man' is inclined by nature to turn in upon himself. To break out becomes harder and harder. Finally he cannot express himself at all anymore. This is worse than suicide; it is a smothering of self by self, and it makes a person utterly miserable. Inside, he becomes a knot of pain.

To confess the faith is to be liberated from this horrible, deadening self-encapsulation. By it we enter into the communion of saints, in communion with the Mediator into the middle of the vast landscape of world history, and in communion with the Triune God, who fills eternity and more. In this openness is life. Here nothing is beyond utterance, not even the self, the deepest self.

Everything made public

In our confession, everything is uttered, everything in time and everything in eternity, everything about mankind and everything about God. And this happens, as we said, in public, in the hearing of the entire human race. In principle, it happens on the street, in the marketplace. This isn't just true of our churchgoing, visible in our going down the street to church, but it is true of everything the church does, of her preaching and her sacraments, of her singing and her prayers, and also of her profession of faith. That's why churches have steeples and bells: so everyone can see the steeple and hear the ringing of the bells.

To confess the faith is a public matter, the more so if it may cost a person his job, his reputation or his life. He who makes profession of faith is a witness. And a witness is also a martyr. That's how the church began in early Europe. And that's how it was in National Socialist and Communist states. And that's how it may well end up in the future.

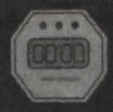
It is true, though, that the public character of our confession is always also folded inward. It is never purely and solely a worldly act. It also possesses its own churchly character. There is also a closed aspect to confession and to being church. Between the public and the faith there is a certain tension, for faith is not everyone's cup of tea. The catholicity of the church is not the same thing as the universality of the human race.

Keeping faith hidden

Sometimes it may even be necessary for tactical reasons to keep the faith hidden. One may do so to avoid needlessly risking one's life. Or, like Bonhoeffer, one may do so to protect the holy mysteries of faith from profanation by an arrogant culture determined to strangle the life of the heart. One may also do so in times when faith and the sacraments are in danger of becoming merely a matter of fashion and good manners so that the church is in the process of becoming wholly worldly. This is why the preachers of the Calvinist revival in the 19th century preached such heavy sermons that they scared people away from the Lord's table.

But this does not erase the fact that the Christian church can never in principle be reduced to a mystery religion, to a wholly closed fellowship that behaves secretively over toward the outside world and to which one is admitted only after a long process of initiation. By its very nature the Christian church has a wholly public character. She confesses her faith in public, including the deepest mysteries of the Trinity, the two natures of Christ and predestination, for every Tom, Dick and Harriet to hear.

After the Buzzer



Tim Antonides

Reflections on a plate of poutine

Halfway through a plate of poutine, I took a moment to reflect. I sat there in the Fleetwood Arms pub in the middle of December and let the gravy drip off my fingers. I stared at the heart-attack-on-a-plate I was eating. The gooey cheddar, crispy bacon bits, and oil-shined fries stared back. I thought about the hedonism and disgusting sloth of this act. I considered the lard that was slithering through my arteries. I felt shame.... And then I dug in again.

I had been working up to this for some time. I decided in October that I wanted to get in good shape for Christmas. Studying tends to lead to lousy eating habits and little exercise, and I didn't want to go home to the excesses of the holidays already feeling bloated and out-of-shape. I would walk to school every day and eat healthy, moderate meals. That way I could enjoy myself at Christmas guilt-free.

My reward for self-deprivation

I met my goal. I showed a lot of discipline and restraint. I walked an hour a day. I ate boring humus sandwiches and slapped myself when I craved a Big Mac. It paid off, and I went home for the holidays looking fairly fit and feeling great. In fact, I more or less drove straight from the airport to the Fleetwood Arms for some poutine and a cheeseburger. This was my reward for two months of hard slugging and self-deprivation.

Now, here I sit in the computer lab at school. I got back from Canada last week. I'm 15 pounds heavier than when I left. I feel sluggish. I have no energy. I feel like I did last fall. This morning, I decided to get back into my fitness routine. My goal is to feel good for Spring Break. We're driving to New Orleans and meeting up with family. I want to be able to indulge myself again without guilt.

Continuous cycle of over-indulgence and self-denial

I suppose it's good to have goals to keep you going. I know I need something to shoot for to motivate me. But isn't this kind of pathetic, too? It's a continuous cycle of over-indulgence and self-denial. Ideally, I should want to take good care of myself out of gratitude to my Creator. I wonder why that's not enough for me. I set goals so that I can reward myself for being disciplined. But I don't really take time to value what it means to care for my body as a creation.

In ways I am understanding more and more, we tend to do a lot of this type of goal-setting in our relationships with God. Some of us get heavily involved in church work because it feels good to be needed and valuable. Is that wrong? Well, no, but too often the act of worship is lost. We may do things because they make us feel good, not because we want to show gratitude for our salvation. Maybe some go to church because it feels good to be part of an ethnic social club, and not because they want to contribute meaningfully to the body of Christ.

At times, we're afraid to talk about self-esteem because it seems so humanistic, so Tony Robbins. Of course, God wants us to feel good about ourselves as we live in obedience. Yet it is important to let a spirit of gratitude drive us as we work, worship, and exercise in his Kingdom. It's something I need to remind myself to do, even as I eat poutine at the Fleetwood Arms.

Tim Antonides in a teacher and sports coach currently studying in Chicago, Illinois.

News Analysis

Two Spirit-filled conferences on biblical servanthood

WWW.HAUSA.COM PHOTOS (2)

Children outside a corner store in Nigeria.

Adrian and Wendy Helleman

We have seen the future of the Christian church — it is black and Pentecostal! If, after eight months in Nigeria, we were not yet convinced of it, two conferences we were privileged to attend in early December removed any doubts.

These conferences, or 'retreats', are organized annually by Peace House, a ministry focused on revival and unity in the Nigerian churches; it is based in Gboko, a town tucked away in the South East of Nigeria, in Benue State, the heart of Tiv-land, where CRC missionaries have worked for many decades. Gboko is right next door to Mkar, long the headquarters of Christian Reformed World Missions among the Tiv, and still the home of the Reformed Theological Seminary of Nigeria. Adrian had met Gbile Akanni, the founder of Peace House, only a few weeks earlier at a meeting in the Jos area, and received an invitation to participate. We cleared our schedules and went, with only an inkling of the experience awaiting us.

The clergy: a catalyst

For most years the major retreat, held from Wednesday evening to Sunday (during the first week of December), has been preceded by a retreat (Sunday evening through Wednesday morning) for those ministering in it: organizers, counselors, and speakers. However, participants attracted to such annual retreats have been mainly from charismatic, or Pentecostal churches. So this year Gbile and his team determined that it was time to make a change by inviting the leading clergy of those churches that to date have not been greatly involved, particularly from the Anglican, Methodist and other 'mainline' denominations. In this he was clearly successful, for the first three-day Clergy Retreat attracted bishops, general secretaries, and other senior clergy, about 200 leaders in all, representing the major non-Pentecostal denominations. The theme of this retreat for church leaders was: "The Clergy …a catalyst in God's move."

Opening devotions each morning, led by Dr. Tokunbo Adeyemo, the General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals In Africa (based in Nairobi, Kenya), stressed the critical role of prayer in the life of God's servants. While churches may advertise large public prayer meetings, the pastors' spiritual life (following Mt. 6.6) must flow from a commitment to personal prayer, humble, passionate, and done in secret. Giving the example of Daniel's prayer in the face of enemies who were after his life (Dan. 6.10), Adeyemo stressed the need to pray knowledgably, with consistency, consecration and courage. And finally, using the example of David who found strength in the Lord when his own men wanted to stone him (1 Sam. 30.6), he encouraged his listeners that, in the heat of the opposition which is inevitable for those who serve, they remember God's goodness, recall Scripture passages to reinforce faith, use spiritual songs to raise their spirits, and never forget to call on God's ever-present help.

Reversing negative impact of church

Aside from a series of seminars dealing with biblical perspectives on evangelism and missions, three workshops explored the theme of the conference in some depth. The first workshop encouraged the clergy to make more effective use of women and youth in the congregations. The second, which was co-ordinated by Adrian, examined the role of clergy in reversing the negative impact of the church in Nigerian society, dealing particularly with the issue of corruption as it also touches the church. And the third examined theological and spiritual preparation of the clergy, emphasizing the role of established clergy in discipling and modeling servant leadership.

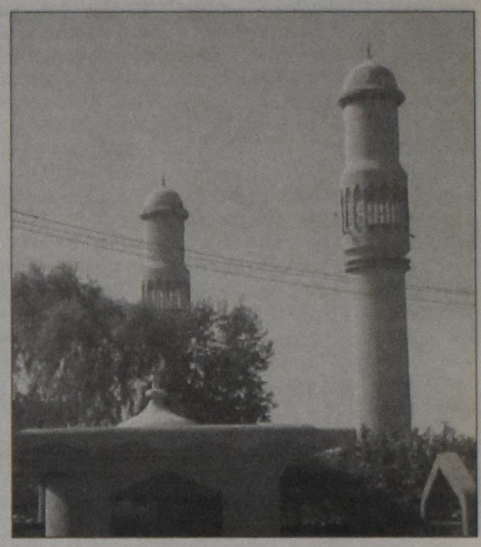
Final messages were presented by well-known preachers at the end of each day. On Monday evening the Anglican bishop of Ondo (southwest Nigeria), G. L. Lasebikan, focused on the servant of God as a compassionate 'rescue operator' for those perishing in a time of famine, like Elisha, who with a little flour was able to undo the 'death in the pot' of stew prepared from an unknown vine of the fields (2 Kings 4.38-41). On Tuesday evening Rev. M.R. Popoola of Ilorin's New Testament Life Mission church (not too far from Lagos) charged church leaders with getting their priorities straight, valuing prayer above preaching, their own family life and marriage above the congregation, and teaching above administration.

The heart of this retreat

But the messages of the main speaker, Gbile Akanni clearly provided the heart of this retreat. Akanni explained his invitation to the assembled clergy as follows: "At the threshold of any significant move of God on earth, He summons the leaders of His people to a mountain apart, to commune with them." God met with Moses on a mountain for 40 days and nights, and Jesus took Peter, James and John with him up on a mountain to pray. "We are definitely on the threshold of another visitation of God in the Church in our land, and by the grace and mercy of God you are the priests on duty at such a time as this," Akanni explained.

He began his series of talks with a reflection on the role of Zechariah, who was on duty, serving as priest, when the angel Gabriel announced the miraculous son to be born to him and Elizabeth in their old age (Luke 1.5-25). Unlike Mary, who also received such a message, Zechariah questioned the angel's announcement, and was struck with silence, until it came to pass. His second message reflected on the call of Jeremiah, who was specially appointed to go where God sent him, to speak as he was commanded, and to do so courageously, for God Himself would be with him to rescue him (Jer. 1.4-10). He encouraged those who had been ordained, or set aside in such a special way, to be ready for God to use them as his own weapon, his battle axe, to shatter nations and destroy kingdoms (Jer. 51.20-23).

Akanni's third message focused on Jesus' commissioning of Peter as a shepherd of the flock (John 21.15-19). Peter had been tested and had fallen, but Jesus specifically reinstated him in his position of leadership among the disciples. Because of Peter's critical role, Jesus gave him special attention, realizing that spiritual authority would not be a matter of a position (or a robe), but of his very life, closeness to God, and witness to the joy and sorrow of Jesus' earthly ministry. In his closing charge, Akanni reiterated his conviction that God is about to do something amazing in our days (Hab. 1.5); the time has come for a breakthrough. After years of barrenness and unfruitful labor in the mainline churches, the time has come for God to act. He challenged his audience to be prepared, as a ready instrument in God's hands, and encouraged them to shepherd God's people in this new era of God's work.



A mosque in Kaduna, Nigeria.

A gifted speaker

Akanni not only demonstrated deep insight into God's word, he is a gifted speaker. His messages typically lasted two to three hours. But no one complained; we soon learned to take a bottle of water with us, since it did get quite hot during the middle of the day. Is it because Nigerians are not as spoiled by television and the impact of instant news presented in a few minutes and through short sound bytes? Is their attention span so much longer than ours? Akanni's sensitivity to the audience, and his use of dramatic presentation provide only part of the explanation. Rather, it must be sought in the message he presented and his ability to make God's Word come alive, to make it speak in a clear and personal way. His message was timely; it was a message his audience clearly was eager to hear.

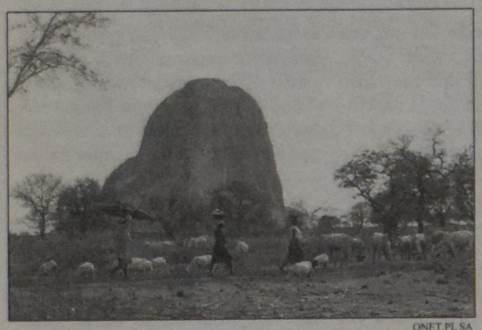
This Clergy Retreat probably marks the first time in the history of Nigeria that so many church leaders met together in one room and expressed their unity in worship and prayer. And never before have we seen so many Anglican bishops raise their hands and pray out loud in the Spirit. Reflecting on this conference a participant from a neighboring African state wrote us afterwards that he was still "meditating on the memories of Gboko, where from the very first day I believe that walls were broken in the hearts of men, and bridges were built."

A roar like Niagara Falls

The second conference, the "Ministers' Leadership Retreat" met from Wednesday evening to Sunday morning. For us it was an unforgettable experience to participate in this retreat together with about 20,000 Africans and a scattering of other foreign participants. When that many people speak in tongues at the same time the roar is like that of Niagara Falls. This audience could not be contained in any ordinary auditorium and met in a large "Tent," a concrete structure with a sheet iron roof and huge windowless openings on all sides, seating some 15,000 on wooden benches. About another 5,000 sat or stood outside under makeshift canopies. Those at the back and on the sides of the "Tent" were served by loudspeakers; if they were close enough they could follow the program by means of a number of TV monitors. As foreign participants we were given plastic armchairs and placed right on the first rows. Although we found this somewhat disconcerting, especially since we were also housed and fed separately from the Nigerians, we also realized that a degree of separation from the crowd was mainly for our own protection and comfort. The organizers arranged accommodation and meals for everyone. And most remarkable of all, everything was provided without charge. There was no solicitation for any kind of funding, nor was any offering taken.

The format of the second retreat

News Analysis



ONET.PL SA

The countryside near Jos, Nigeria.

was rather different from that of the first. In the 'Tent' morning sessions began early with prayer, Bible study and worship. Shortly after 8 a.m. the opening charge was given, and this was followed by a time of prayer for the nations, particularly those of Africa; these sessions were led by Timothy Olonade of Jos. At about 10 a.m. it was time for the first major message given by Gbile Akanni; as at the first retreat, these messages often continued without break until 1 p.m. or later. Only then would the crowd disperse for lunch, which was followed by Bible studies in small groups and seminars on opportunities for service, particularly in missions. Evening sessions, starting about 7.30 p.m., once more were opened with worship in song, and a time of prayer for the nations, after which Akanni gave his second address for the day, typically finishing at about 10.30 p.m.

The theme for the second conference was taken from Luke 17.7-10, the parable of the master and his servant, focusing on the command: "get yourself ready and wait on me" (verse 8, NIV), or in the version that Akanni typically uses, "gird thyself, and serve me" (KJV). His seven messages for this retreat extracted much useful advice for Christian workers as he examined various aspects of this parable.

God's total claim on us

Akanni began by considering God's total claim on us for servanthood. Rooted in creation, our redemption in Christ, and the endowment of our gifts and talents by God himself, there can be nothing else and no one else having such a claim to possess us. Turning next to Biblical patterns for servanthood, he looked at the selfless, sacrificial nature of that service. A service which pleases Him must be based on absolute trust in God, not looking for immediate reward, thanks or gratification for work done; Akanni gave the sobering example of Gehazi, who thought Elisha foolish for turning down gifts, and took leprosy on himself (2 Kings 5.19-27). The true commendation of the faithful servant lies in his being given another and more demanding assignment! Our service is not 'profitable', only a reasonable duty, as the love of God in Christ compels (2 Cor. 5.14).

In examining the necessary preparation for servanthood, Akanni considered the character of the servant, emphasizing selfless devotion and pure simplicity as spiritual garments needed by the servant to stand before the King of Kings. In this connection he contrasted the priestly garments of Aaron, which received much attention for beauty and holiness (Ex. 28), with the pure radiance which shone from Moses' face when he had communed with God. The Aaronic priesthood served in weakness (Heb. 7.28); their robes could be put on and taken off. Those serving under the new covenant must be consecrated from the heart and live a life of obedience, consistent with their commitment.

God's provision for ministry

The two final messages dealt with God's provision for ministry. How did the servant prepare a meal for the master? How else but by finding in the master's storehouse whatever he needed for the meal? In dealing with this theme Akanni shared very frankly the basic principles which have guided his ministry through Peace House. He explained that our God is not like the Egyptian slave master who expected the Israelites to provide their own bricks, and build as well (Ex. 5.7). He only says, "Do this for me," when he has already provided the means for accomplishing the task. Akanni gave the example of Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb?" and Abraham's confident response, "God himself will provide" (Gen. 22.7-8). If you are in the place where God wants you to serve him, God will himself provide what is needed. Akanni warned missionaries against begging within the congregations, and also warned them not to receive gifts given out of sympathy! He advised against becoming attached to individual donors, but rather to allow freedom for giving to whatever cause the donor may feel led. Akanni accordingly rejects the use of pledge forms or reminders to donors, as a type of spiritual compulsion that has no Biblical basis; the truly Biblical equivalent is a vow, made freely and fulfilled in obedience and thankfulness to God. As dutiful servants, we are to look up to God as the great co-ordinator and provider of our needs. He will not abandon those whom he has gifted and appointed, as Akanni reiterated with more examples from the lives of Elijah, Nehemiah and Ezra.

From our observance at these two conferences, Gbile Akanni practices what he preaches. God has provided bountifully for this ministry but it has not always been easy, as he himself admits. At one point early in his ministry, after preaching in a small Nigerian town, Akanni had no money left to get home; he had turned down moneys offered by young people of the church, telling them he had friends in that town who would provide for him. Unfortunately, it turned out that none of these friends were at home to help him. He finally hitchhiked the distance and arrived home a day late, missing another commitment, and totally famished because he had not eaten for two days.

Refreshing integrity

After the constant pleas for money heard in churches, and on religious radio and television broadcasting, it is refreshing to note the integrity of this ministry. Public television here airs a lot of religious programming, even back to back. It appears that Nigerians have learned fundraising tactics from American evangelists who make shameless appeals, on Nigerian television. Nor can one ignore the '419' scams (referring to an article of the Nigerian criminal code); even Christians get involved in such scams, and thereby compromise the reputation of the church, and far worse, of the gospel itself.

The Clergy Retreat was motivated by the weakness of the Christian church in Nigeria, in part because of deep divisions and lack of co-operation between denominations. But that weakness also comes from the degree to which the corruption, so prevalent in society, business and politics, has invaded and marked the church. The amazing quantitative growth of the Nigerian churches these last decades has not yet been matched by a qualitative growth. The gospel needs to have a much deeper impact on the moral standards of Nigerians who flock to church every Sunday.

Gbili Akanni's messages are

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Adrian and Wendy Helleman

both refreshing and challenging. He spoke for hours without anyone complaining, preaching without a written text or even notes. Instead, he encouraged Christian teachers and leaders to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, his messages are Biblically solid, based as they are on a lifetime of intimacy with the Bible. They gave us straight application, without the lengthy background exposition to which we have become accustomed. Rather, he dispensed with that scaffolding and presented the finished product, according to the leading of the Spirit. While we would not advocate all preachers to imitate Akanni's style, we certainly recognize his unique gift. Who else could draw the more than 15,000 church workers annually to a remote corner of Nigeria called Gboko? In this assessment we are not alone, for he is frequently invited to preach throughout Nigeria, where he typically attracts large crowds; he also speaks outside Nigeria in many other countries of Africa, England, and in Europe.

Exuberant worship

Although Gbile Akanni himself belongs to a Baptist church, his style might best be described as mildly Pentecostal. Pentecostalism is strong throughout Africa, because it appears that such a theology and style of worship best meets the needs of African believers. And this in turn helps to explain the phenomenal growth of the Christian Church in this continent. Exuberant worship goes hand in hand with a strong supernaturalism, such as one rarely finds in European or North American churches. There is no need to persuade Africans that life is religion; they already know that. Their world is still populated by spirits, good and bad, and possession by evil spirits is not foreign to them. Accordingly, exorcism and deliverance from the demonic, as well as other forms of healing, are prevalent in services of Pentecostal churches. Less positive is the phenomenon of the prosperity gospel which has made huge inroads in many denominations across Africa. From Nigeria this false gospel of 'instant rewards for the faithful' has also been carried to other African countries.

Our eyes were opened

Our eyes were opened, these few days in Gboko, to the great work which the Lord is busy accomplishing in his church in Nigeria and throughout Africa. It is too easy to get overwhelmed with the problems which have accompanied the phenomenal growth of the church. However, as we noted the dynamic response to the messages of a teacher like Akanni, we could only thank God for his ministry, and its promise for the future of the church. Akanni himself would be the first to say, "You have not come here for me, a man, but only because God Himself has called you, to accomplish the good works which he has prepared for you to do" (Eph. 2.10).

We were particularly thankful also for the first conference, which drew so many leaders from mainline churches; these are the churches whose work over the last decades has often been negatively affected by the growth of Pentecostalism. If Akanni has been successful in building bridges between these and the more charismatic churches he will have made an enormous contribution to healing sore relationships between churches and denominations in Nigeria.

Adrian and Wendy Helleman are both professors in the department of Religious Studies at the University of Jos, Nigeria; they are missionaries, sent by Christian Studies International (sister organization in Canada of the Kansas-based International Institute for Christian Studies, founded by Danny McCain), and work in Nigeria as 'partners' with Christian Reformed World Missions.

News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

NEVER CALL YOURSELF a financial expert. Take last year's stock markets. In Barron's I saw a list of 22 people regularly appearing on Louis Rukeyser's *Wall Street Week*. These professional traders are paid to guide thousands of rich clients to greater wealth.

Early last year they did some crystal gazing about the December 31, 2002 finish of both the Dow Jones and the Nasdaq. The highest was 13,750, the lowest 10,235, the average: about 11,500. Where did this index end up? 8,342, about 28 per cent lower than these high earning money managers had estimated.

On the NASDAQ their record was even worse. Their guesses ranged from 1,700 to 2,800, averaging about 2,000. The sad reality: 1,336 or 35 per cent lower than the forecast of these million-dollar brokers.

Last year was the third year for the Dow Jones Index to decline, for a combined loss of 37 per cent. It has been 61 years — 1938-1941 — since the index fell for three straight years. For those whose recollection or knowledge of history goes back that far, these years were the beginning of World War II, with Germany claiming part of Czechoslovakia, annexing Austria, invading Poland, and conquering most of Europe.

Perhaps this tells us something for today. For four years of straight losses, we have to go to 1929, the infamous year of the Great Crash. I am not an expert, so I can make predictions. I have been investing my RRSPs for decades. In spite of mandatory withdrawals of seven to eight per cent each year, my portfolio has not declined. It has paid me to be a 'bear'.

AM I NOW BECOMING A bull? Bull. Here's why. The world depends on the American consumer to "be the locomotive of the global economy." The past spending boom was fed by rising stock markets. Now as stock markets collapsed, house prices have gone up, especially in the U.S.A, where mortgage interest on both primary residences and second and third homes is tax-deductible.

With lending rates at an almost historic low, people have been buying houses or borrowed top money on their real estate equity. They also used this capital to buy — with tax-free money — cars and luxury vacations. In the process, residential property values have zoomed. Last month, *USA TODAY* prophesied that "Homes are the 'bedrock' of the recovery" and in a subsequent article said that "Many consumers sell stock to put money in Real Estate."

SOUNDS PRETTY bubble-ish to me. I am a bit of an expert on Real Estate. My entire business career has been in that field, first as an insurer of real estate, then as a salesman and broker, ending my professional life in the real estate appraisal field.

So being an expert there probably disqualifies me as a reliable source of predictions. But just as stock brokers persist in their forecasting folly, I will add to the confusion and, first by analyzing the situation, offer my opinion, in the probably conceited belief that my guess is as good as anybody else's. (Of course I mean better.)

Spending depends on three factors: labor income, interest income and savings. Labor income has been dropping, from 8.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2000 to 3.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2002, and still dropping (All U.S.A. figures). As unemployment continues to rise there and personal income goes negative, while savings are at an all-time low and interest income is close to zero, I find it logical that many will lose the means as well as the will to spend.

THIS BRINGS TO MIND the concept of 'tipping point.' A few years ago Malcolm Gladwell, an American journalist, wrote a bestseller by that name with the subtitle: *How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference.* Mr. Gladwell showed how its principles could be widely applied, from the spectacular explosion in mobile phone use to the fall in New York's crime rate in the early 1990s. An array of tiny occurences, a small drop in personal income, a slight rise in unemployment, a minor increase in the mortgage rates, a more sluggish economy, frequent drops in the stock market, all these factors, insignificant by themselves, can, when happening simultaneously, cause people to panic, close their purses and start — horror of horrors — to save money. That will seal the doom of the spend-spend-spend mentality on which our society depends.

Here is my 'prediction': as the debt bubble continues to break, mortgage rates will become more volatile, the bull market in real estate will deflate and so the last bulwark to which our economy has retreated will be destroyed and with it the boom times.

OH, YES, I HAVE BEEN wrong before. Nevertheless, I think it is wise to be debt-free. Because if a recession does come, deflation will be its ugly companion, for which there is no remedy, as Japan is discovering.

In the 1930s deflation was cured by World War II, a just war. Our unjust war for oil will only make matters worse.

THAT WAR. IS HISTORY repeating itself? Papa Bush was defeated by Bill Clinton in 1992, the year after Gulf War I. No democrat of name wanted to run against the then-chief who had an 80 per cent approval rating as president. So an unknown governor of one of the least of all states, Arkansas, with a population smaller than Toronto, took him on. Clinton's mantra: "It's the Economy, Stupid!"

In 2004 we will again have a sitting president Bush as candidate, again it will be a post-Iraq war period, and, if my gut feeling is right, again the economy will dominate. For the first time since 9/11, Mr. Bush's ratings slipped below 60 per cent, reflecting growing unease with his approach on the economy and taxes, domestic policy and international threats.

There is no doubt, by now, that the people in Washington were elected by the rich for the benefit of the rich. Tax cuts amounting to trillions of dollars, have been proposed and passed, with the major part going to the very well-to-do. The most recent $674 billion package, plans to do away with taxes on dividends, of which $150 billion will directly benefit the richest one per cent of Americans and a further $75 billion will go to the top five per cent. He also wants to end estate taxes on huge inherited fortunes.

Bush himself, according to Bloomberg Financial Services, will benefit by $44,500 and Vice President Cheney will be a whopping $327,000 richer.

Meanwhile he is cutting winter fuel assistance and federal housing subsidies for needy Americans. All this when the gap between rich and poor is wider than it has been since just before the Great Depression.

The world's press sees all this very much as religion-motivated, because Mr. Bush is a believing man. Bible study and prayer is an accepted pastime in his inner circle. Even a casual reading of the Good Book — the most bought and least read — reveals that it always speaks kindly of the poor and often condemns the rich.

Hendrik Hertzberg, in the January 20 issue of the *New Yorker* shows us how the Republicans in Washington read the Bible: "Proverbs 19:17: "He who is kindly to the rich lends to the Lord." Matthew 19:21 "Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the rich, and you will have treasures in heaven." 1 Timothy 6:10: "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of good." End of quote. My casual count in the 150 Psalms reveals at least 22 pleas to better the plight of the poor.

Bush is a believing man. John le Carre, famous writer of first class spy novels, in a recent article in the *Globe and Mail*, laments:"The religious cant that will send American troops into battle is perhaps the most sickening aspect of this surreal war-to-be. Mr Bush has an arm-lock on God. God appointed America to save the world in any way that suits America. God appointed Israel to be the nexus of America's Middle East policy and anyone who wants to mess with that idea is a) anti-Semitic, b) anti - American, c) with the enemy and d) a terrorist."

WHAT'S GOING ON here? More and more thoughtful Americans now openly say that the U.S.A. wants a hammerlock on the oil supply. Securing Iraq ensures that the so-envied American Lifestyle of flagrant energy use continues. The current administration believes with the power of religion that once the war in Iraq is won — a cake-walk, of course — everyone else will fall into line; the whole Middle East will eat humble pie, Europe will shut up, North Korea and Iran will tremble and lick the boots of mighty America.

Reality is that, as my Bible says, "They that sow the wind, shall reap the whirlwind." Bush is too pregnant with Iraq — eight months plus — to abort this ill-conceived enterprise. The folly of this war is that in addition to causing untold suffering — not only in Iraq — it will weaken the position of the U.S.A. and its prominence in the political world. We are already in an economic downward spiral, and in our chaotic world, this Iraq venture is as suicidal as our creation-killing lifestyle.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

Food..? For Thought..??

As the sun quietly melts the snow and draws the frost out of the earth...

So unconditional, Christ-like love can transform the coldest heart into a warm, loving one!

Self-discovery of Imprisoned Persons

Casey Vander Stelt
'Born From Experience'
(905) 385-9261

A **charitable** gift **annuity** offers:

REDEEMER University College

- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift for Redeemer University College

Rates of return for those over 65 range from 7% to 10%.
Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote.
Information available on other gift-planning options as well.

CSS

Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905-648-2131 ext. 4205 (Ben) or ext. 4408 (Rita) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

Advertising/Business Directory

We could really use your investment now.

CRC EXTENSION FUND

"...serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

RATES TO MARCH 31, 2003.

Ext. fund: we pay 3.75%

RRSP: you earn approx. 4.2%

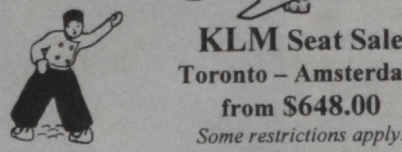
Call: 416-461-1207

Write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1

Fax: 416-465-6367

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam Madany
($5.95 Canada/ $4.95 U.S.)
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind. Also available – essays on **understanding the Middle East**. ($1.50)
Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON L2R 3Y8

Valentine Travel



KLM Seat Sale
Toronto – Amsterdam
from $648.00
Some restrictions apply.
We also have vacation packages and Cruises.

201 City Centre Dr. Suite 501 Mississauga, Ont. L5B 2T4
905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144

Burlington, Ontario

Maranatha Homes

This award-winning Senior Citizen Homes is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation.
Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income.

Information from:
Rosanne van der Woerd, 3260 New Street
Burlington, ON L7N 3L4 905-639-9054

EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS HORIZONS
You can advertise in Christian Courier's *Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25 + GST.*

Call: 1-800-969-4838 for details.

Psalter Hymnals falling apart?

Don't buy replacements, recycle them. We can rebind almost any book for a fraction of the cost of new, and the rebound books will last much longer than the original binding. Why not send us one of your church's hymnals or bibles and we will rebind it at no charge, just to show you how good your old books can look. Send your sample request on church letterhead with the item for binding.

Limit one sample per church. Normal price for quantities of five or more $7.50. We rebind and restore all types of books, including personal and family Bibles.

Wallaceburg Bookbinding
1-800-214-BIND
95 Arnold Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 3P3

BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY

Richard Haalboom
Q.C., B.A., LL.B.
BARRISTER SOLICITOR NOTARY
7 Duke West, Suite 302
Kitchener, ON N2H 6N7
phone: 519-579-2920
fax: 519-576-0471

Electric Power Tool Service Saw Blade Sharpening
Supplier of Quality Woodworking Machines
ART'S TOOL SALES & SERVICE Ltd.
10 Nihan Dr.
St. Catharines, ON
L2N 1L1
(905) 646-0728
Aart Van Krimpen
"We service what we sell"

Arie Hoogerbrugge
Associate Broker
RE/MAX Del Mar Realty Inc.
840 Queenston Road
Stoney Creek, ON L8G 4A8
Bus: 905-662-5300
Fax: 905-664-2300

Serving the Kitchener-Waterloo, and Cambridge area in real estate.

Jake Benjamins
Broker / Owner
Office 519-575-9092
Fax 519-465-1533
www.jakebenjamins.com
jake@jakebenjamins.com

BAKKER
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR
570 Welland Avenue
St. Catharines, ON L2M 5V6
Albert J. Bakker
905-688-9352

Ada Realty Ltd.
Suite 404, 2011-137 Ave.
Edmonton, AB T5A 4W2
Tel. (403) 473-8149

Sid Vandermeulen

Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service
4184 Mountain St. PO Box 844
Beamsville, ON. L0R 1B0
Ph: 905-563-4471
Fax: 905-563-4696
Email:
wbts@sympatico.ca
Emma Winter

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME
287 Station St., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Serving Families For 4 Generations
Directors: Gove C. Merritt and Thomas C. Merritt
(905) 957-7031

Jerry's Auto Body (Beamsville) Inc.
Serving Beamsville and area since 1969
Complete Collision Repairs • Quality Refinishing
Jerry Gerritsen
Alan Gerritsen
5529 Regional Rd. #81
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: (905) 563-7702

MAGNAVOX-HITACHI-ZENITH SALES & SERVICE
TELEVISION-RADIO-STEREO
ANTENNA INSTALLATION & REPAIRS
GARY VAN DYK
Serving the Niagara area for 30 years
GRANTHAM TV CENTRE LTD.
391 Vine St., St. Catharines, Ont.
Phone: (905) 934-9952 or (905) 934-9964

TEL (905) 688-8139
FAX (905) 685-7651
meshuis@law.on.ca
#201-60 JAMES ST
ST. CATHARINES, ON
L2R 7E7
MARK D. ESHUIS, B.A., LL.B
BARRISTER - SOLICITOR - NOTARY PUBLIC
• CRIMINAL LAW
• WILLS AND ESTATES
• REAL ESTATE
• CIVIL LAW

AGRI-BUSINESS
MEESTER
INSURANCE BROKERS
SPECIALIST
SMITHVILLE
Tel. (905) 957-2333 or 1-800-465-8256
www.meesterinsurance.com

Glendale Motors
407 Wilson St., Ancaster
Just west of Mohawk on Hwy. #2
We supply propane
Rob Brouwer
Doug Kloet
Shell
(905) 648-4113 Adrian Kloet (owner)

578 Upper James St.
Hamilton, ON
L9C 2Y6
Digital Art & Graphics
For all your printing needs
1 colour to full colour process
flyers, books, catalogues, magazines, etc.
call **Brian or Kathie Bezemer** at:
Toll-free: 1-800-247-0155 or: 905-574-0822
Website: www.digitalartandgraphics.com

Reformed Faith Witness needs your support.
Your gift of $10 or more to **Reformed Faith Witness** is tax receiptable and will be greatly appreciated by the staff of **Christian Courier** and the board of RFW. Please make your cheque payable to Reformed Faith Witness

Classifieds

Classifieds

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, thirteen days prior to publication date.

RATES

All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (P.I.) + GST (columns are two inches wide).

Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 P.I. + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

PERSONAL ADS

Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD

Mail: *Christian Courier*
1 Hiscott St.
St. Catharines, ON L2R 1C7
fax: 905-682-8313
Email: accounts@christiancourier.ca

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style.
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

90th Birthday

1913 February 14 2003
Katwijk aan Zee Brampton

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we announce the 90th birthday of our mother, oma and great-oma

Gertrude Kamphuis (nee Parlevliet)

She has learned, especially in the last 10 years without speech, "to be content in all circumstances" Ephesians 4:11
"Her children arise and call her blessed." Proverbs 31:28

Donna Kamphuis - *St.Catharines*
Anna & Conrad Van Dijk - *Hamilton*
Mary & Roelof Kiers - *Hoogeveen*
Michelle & John Visser - *Belleville*
13 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren

Open House will be held in Harmony Hall at Holland Christian Homes on Saturday, Feb.15, 2003 from 2-4 p.m.

Mail to: Mrs. G. Kamphuis
HCH, FM 110,
7900 McLaughlin Rd.S.
Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Anniversaries

Andijk, February 26, 1953 Aylmer, February 26, 2003

"If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."
Exodus 33:15

With deep thanks to God, family and friends congratulate

JACK GROOT and MARGARET GROOT (nee Tensen)

as they mark the 50th anniversary of their marriage.
May God's goodness and grace shine on them. And may all who know them continue to be touched by their faith and love.

1953 February 10 2003

"I lift up my eyes to the hills- where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."
Psalm 121:1

With thanks to God for His great faithfulness and love we rejoice and celebrate 50 years of marriage with our parents and grandparents.

PETER and WILMA DEVRIES (nee Sietsma)

Grace deVries Ritzema - *St. Catharines*
Carissa & John, Shane (Michelle), Justin

Deb & Ray van Boven - *Winnipeg*
Nathan, Andrea

William & Janet de Vries - *St. Catharines*
Peter, Alicia, Sarah, Jonathan

You are invited to share our joy at an Open House to be held on Saturday, February 8th from 2-4 p.m.
at Trinity Christian Reformed Church. (1230 Old Martindale Rd.)
Best wishes only please.
Mailing address: 1593 2nd. Ave. Louth RR#3
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 6P9

NEW ORGAN PUBLICATION

Three For Holy Week
Composed by
Dr. John Vandertuin
Published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO USA.
Available from Ausburg Fortress, Kitchener, Ont.
1-800-265-6397 Order number: 51-976993-19

Obituaries

July 30, 1916 January 3, 2003
Abbaga Cobourg
Friesland Ontario

ANNA ANDELA
(nee Bergstra)

"For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper; I will not fear." Hebrews 13:5, 6

On January 3rd, 2003, the Lord granted eternal glory to our wife, mother, grandmother (Oma), great-grandmother, and sister. Although a number of medical setbacks tested her body and spirit throughout the last twenty or so years, she never gave in until this past January 3rd.

Her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ assures us of her rightful place in the arms of her loving Savior.

Her presence will surely be missed by one and all. She leaves behind Jentje (Jim), her husband of almost 60 years (Jan.27, 2003), her four children and their families,

John & Corry Andela - *Peterborough*
Chantal & Steve (& daughter Maya)
Sacha & Jeremey
Louis & Tina Andela - *Caledonia*
Tammy & Rick (& sons Tyler & Carson)
Brenda & John O'Hara - *Cobourg*
Jody, David, Michael, Erin,
& Eilisha (Sean - predeceased)
Jeanette & Tom MacDonald - *Cobourg*
Kristy & Joel

and two sisters:Tina Nydam & Carol Ferbeek (Henk) as well as other extended family members.

A memorial service was held in the Grace Christian Reformed Church of Cobourg, on Tuesday January 7, 2003, with Pastor Jack Vanderveer officiating.

Corresponding address:
Mr. James Andela,
672 Burnham St.,
Cobourg, ON K9A 4X4

April 22, 1923 January 3, 2003
Hoogeveen Brampton
Netherlands Canada

GEERT BOOY

"Gracious is the Lord, and righteous: our God is merciful." Psalm 116:5

Geert Booy, our dear husband, father, and Opa, passed away peacefully. He will be dearly missed. But we are reassured knowing that his is with the Lord.

He leaves behind:
His wife, Immie Booy-Dekker
His children:
Hank Booy - *Brampton*
Gia & Adrian Gelok - *Glen Williams*
Emma, Paul, Michelle (Ryan)
Rita & Glenn Carney -*Frederickhouse*
Rebecca (Tom), Ian (Angel), Sarah (Marc), Lisa (Rob), Lydia, Seth, Ryan
John & Johanna Booy
Salt Spring Island
Aaron (Morach), Daniel, Micah (Lisa)
Arlene & Jack VanRyn - *Lisle*
Tim, Lea, David
His great-grandchildren:
Lauryn, Katlyn, Lukas, Ethan
Home address:
35 Kingknoll Dr. 1005 KT
Brampton, ON L6Y 5G5

On January 1, 2003, the Lord took home our dear sister and sister-in-law

FEMMIE KATERBURG-LUBBERTS

in her 81st year.
While we grieve her passing, it is our comfort that she is now free from sickness and pain.
J. Nienhuis Sleen - *The Netherlands*
G. Lubberts - *Waterloo*
G. & K. Biel - *Guelph*
R.& S. Lubberts - *Drayton*
And nieces and nephews.

Special Service

A Dutch service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
February 23 at 3 p.m.
Rev. van Egmond preaching.

Financial Assistance

Those from congregations in **Classis Niagara** who are planning to or are presently **studying for full-time ministry** in the CRC as a pastor and/or evangelist and who are in need of financial assistance for the 2003-2004 academic year are invited to contact the secretary of the Student Fund Committee: Jenny VanderBerg
1662 Second Ave. RR#3
St.Catharines, ON L2R 6P9
Ph: 905-641-1496, Fax: 905-641-4624
Application form deadline is March 22, 2003.

Students from Classis E. Canada who are planning to prepare for full-time ministry in the CRC and who are in need of financial help for the 2003-2004 school year, are kindly invited to contact:
The Student Fund Com.
c/o Mr. James Kooistra
R.R. 1, Williamsburg ON K0C 2H0 Canada ph. 613-535-2152, or e-mail jkooistra@mor-net.on.ca
Please apply before March 31, 2002.

Miscellaneous

Check out our website for JOB OPPORTUNITIES taken from the latest issues of *Christian Courier:* www.christiancourier.ca/Jobs.htm

To advertise your business or to place a family ad, simply send it by e-mail to *Christian Courier:* ads@christiancourier.ca

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

Attention leaders of Gems and Cadets:

Raise funds by selling *Christian Courier* subscriptions

For every new subscriber signed up for a one-year subscription your youth group earns $15.

For every new subscriber signed up for a two-year subscription you earn $20.

Signed up more than 10? Get an extra $5 per subscription for every additional new subscriber.

Contact us at our toll-free number for more details: 1-800-969-4838
Or send us an e-mail: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

Job Opportunities

JOHN KNOX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Brampton, Ontario

invites applications for a **principal**, beginning **Aug. 1, 2003**. The school has approximately 315 students from JK to grade 8. We are looking for someone with a solid reformed perspective and the ability to relate to Christians from a variety of denominational backgrounds.

Check our web site at ***www.bramptonjkcs.org*** for more information about our school. Please direct application and/or questions to:

Mr. John Sprowl, chairperson
Administrative Search Committee
82 McLaughlin Road South
Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7
Tel: 905-796-1989
Fax: 905-451-3448
E-mail: jcsprowl@sympatico.ca
Application deadline: Feb. 15, 2003

Job Opportunities

MUSIC for YOUNG CHILDREN

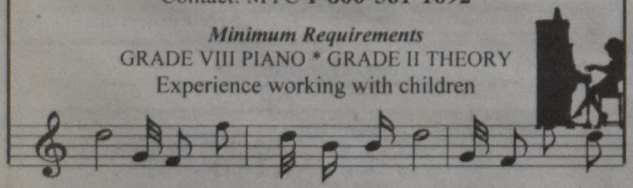
TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

This acclaimed Canadian music programme for children ages 3 and up is training new teachers for several areas in **Southwestern Ontario.**

Contact: Sandra Poolton (Southern Ontario Coordinator)
1-866-884-3080

For other areas across Canada
Contact: MYC **1-800-561-1692**

Minimum Requirements
GRADE VIII PIANO * GRADE II THEORY
Experience working with children



THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Christian University Education

VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC

The King's University College, a young and growing Christian liberal arts and sciences institution, is seeking a Vice President Academic. The successful applicant, as Chief Academic Officer, will report to the President and will preside over all academic affairs in the institution. He/she is responsible for fostering a clear and engaging vision for Christian university education, for review and development of curriculum, for oversight of faculty members, for recruitment of faculty, and for maintaining relations of an academic nature with other universities and government agencies. The VP Academic will work closely with the faculty to achieve institutional academic strategies.

The King's University College's mission is to provide teaching and learning, research, and service to the community based on a transforming engagement with our culture, and animated by a Reformed understanding of the Christian's task in the world. King's offers undergraduate degrees in the arts and sciences, business, and education. Enrolment stands at 630 students, and is growing rapidly, as the institution moves into a challenging new phase of its development.

To be considered for appointment, a candidate must endorse the Mission Statement and the Statement of Faith of The King's University College, and demonstrate a clear understanding of their implications for academic life at the institution.

Qualifications:

- Significant experience in university-level teaching and research, preferably in a Christian higher education setting; doctorate or equivalent
- Strong commitment to Christian university education, and ability to provide leadership in this area
- Experience in academic administration and leadership
- Strong interpersonal and leadership skills

Starting Date: July 1, 2004

Review of applications will begin April 15, 2003, and continue until the position is filled. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Applicants are to send applications with complete Curriculum Vitae in confidence to:

Dr. Henk W. H. Van Andel, President & Chair of the Search Committee
The King's University College 9125 50th Street
www.kingsu.ca Edmonton, AB T6B 2H3 Canada

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

in **Windsor, Ontario**, a K-12 school, is accepting applications for a Grade 5 position.
Computer literate teachers trained to teach from a Christian perspective who demonstrate a vibrant Christian walk are encouraged to apply.

In the interests of time we prefer to communicate electronically, or by fax, but will use surface mail if necessary. *Contact us to receive a Maranatha Application Form*, then send the completed form and complete resume to:

William Van Dyke, Principal
Maranatha Christian Academy
939 Northwood St., Windsor, ON N9E 2B4
Phone: 519-966-7424 **Fax:** 519-966-9519
Email: office@maranathachristian.ca

Check our our web at
www.christiancourier.ca
We have a *forum* where readers can share in discussions or post upcoming events. See our advertisers page and have your business listed.

DCA Travel & Cruise
E-mail: dcatravl@istar.ca
Holiday Packages-Cruises-Flights
ON SALE
TORONTO 416-224-5211
BRADFORD 905-775-6763
Toll Free 1-800-667-2525
Call today - Free delivery at home

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

CHATHAM, Ontario:
Chatham Christian High School invites **teachers**, who demonstrate a passionate love for God and young people, to join our team. We are a growing school in a modern facility, supported by a strong Christian community. We seek applications for the **2003-2004 school year** for a definite opening in Science and possible openings in other subject areas. Please address your letter of application and resume to:

John Van Pelt
Chatham Christian High School
475 Keil Dr. South
Chatham, ON N7M 6L8
Ph: 519-352-4980 Fax: 519-352-4041
E-mail:
johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

SMITHERS, British Columbia:
Bulkley Valley Christian School, a school of 485 students located in the scenic Bulkley Valley of BC., invites applications for **principal** at its **elementary campus**, effective August 1, 2003. This campus has approximately 200 students from K-5. Bulkley Valley Christian is a school rooted in the reformed tradition, but contains a diverse denominational mix. The school also invites applications for the following teaching positions for the **2003 - 2004** school year: intermediate (Gr. 3-5), Gr. 7, middle and/or high school French. Applications and inquiries for these positions can be forwarded to:

John Bulkema Elementary Principal
Bulkley Valley Christian School
P.O. Box 2117
Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N0
Ph: 250-847-9833
Fax: 250-847-0184

WINNIPEG, Manitoba:
Calvin Christian Collegiate is seeking applicants for a **lead teacher** position in senior years sciences for the 2003-2004 academic year. Previous teaching experience is an asset for the successful candidate who will provide leadership in **science** instruction from Gr. 7 to Sr. 4. Applicants should be able to articulate a personal statement of Christian belief. Please send a resume and cover letter to:

D. Taylor, Principal
Calvin Christian Collegiate
706 Day St.
Winnnipeg, MB R2C 1B6
Ph: 204-222-7910
Fax: 204-222-8511
Closing date is March 1, 2003.
We appreciate all applications, however, only those shortlisted will be contacted.

REDEEMER
University College

CHAPLAIN

Applications are invited for the full-time position of Chaplain, beginning August 2003. The Chaplain is responsible for providing pastoral care and spiritual leadership for the Redeemer community, with a particular emphasis on student needs.

Candidates for the position should have a mature Christian faith commitment; a deep sense of calling to ministry among university-age students; a good understanding of the nature of a liberal arts and sciences university rooted in the Reformed Christian tradition; experience in working with people of various cultures and Christian faith traditions; and a relevant masters degree, together with ordination or some other form of accountability to a denomination. (For further information, see www.redeemer.on.ca and check the Quick Links)

Interested applicants should submit a resume, three references and a three-page statement of their approach to campus ministry. The application deadline is February 28, 2003 or until the position is filled. Please direct applications to:

Chaplain Search Committee, Redeemer University College,
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON, L9K 1J4
dvdban@redeemer.on.ca

Preference will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

BEACON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
St. Catharines, ON
seeks a
SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Join an administrative team and dedicated staff striving to implement a creative, Christ-centred program in a close-knit school community.

The successful candidate will give evidence of:
- **a discerning Christian perspective**
- **dynamic leadership gifts**
- **effective organizational/interpersonal skills**

For further information please contact:
Jim Prinsen, Search Committee Chair
c/o Beacon Christian Schools
2 O'Malley Dr.
St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7
905-937-1197 (home)
email: Jjprinsen@aol.com

Visit us at **www.beaconchristian.org** for more information about our future plans.
Application deadline: **February 14, 2003**

BEACON Christian Schools

Full Time YOUTH PASTOR position.
First Christian Reformed Church in Taber

Is seeking a full time youth pastor to direct and coordinate the various youth ministries of our church. We are a church that values our youth and desire that they enter into a warm and growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Position responsibilities also include participation in worship, building a leadership team, pastoral care and counselling, and supervision of the education ministry. If you see yourself meeting these needs in a growing rural congregation of 100 families and have academic qualifications and/or experience to make it all happen, then we would be pleased to hear from you! Send your resume to:

First CRC,
3902 Heritage Drive,
Taber, AB T1G 1A2

A church profile and further details are available on request. If you have any questions contact us at **(403) 223-2331, (403) 223-0790**
Fax (403) 223-0791, or e-mail Pastor Mike Vandyk at:
mvandyk@telusplanet.net

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Huntley's Used Christian Books at 114 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 5X8. We buy and sell used Christian books. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 5:00. **905-988-9223, e-mail: books@interpc.ca**

Miscellaneous

reNew.

ICS
INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES
Christian Graduate Education
www.icscanada.edu

Would 7% to 10% lifetime income appeal to you?

Over 65?
Charitable Gift Annuities can provide these rates, largely tax-free and ultimately benefit the charities of your choice.
Please ask for a confidential, no obligation quotation.

Link Charity Canada Inc.
45 Harriet St. Toronto ON M4L 2G1 Phone: 416-410-4244 Fax: 416-465-6367
www.linkcharity.ca info@linkcharity.ca

Job Opportunity

REDEEMER
University College

MATHEMATICS

Redeemer University College invites applications for a sessional position in mathematics, beginning August 2003. The successful candidate will be able to teach a calculus sequence, including multivariable calculus, and a mathematics course for non-majors.

As a liberal arts and sciences university college rooted in the Reformed tradition of Christianity, we seek candidates who are committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from this perspective. Applicants should possess an M.Sc. or a Ph.D. Interested applicants should submit a *curriculum vitae*, three letters of reference, a one to two page description of your faith and how it shapes your view of your discipline and a one to two page summary of your philosophy of education and schooling. The deadline for applications is March 31, 2003 or until filled.

Direct general inquiries and applications to:
Dr. Jacob P. Ellens, Vice-President (Academic),
Redeemer University College, 777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4 Canada
jellens@redeemer.on.ca.

Please direct specific inquiries, via e-mail, to Dr. Doug Needham, Dean of Sciences and Social Sciences, at dneedham@redeemer.on.ca.

Redeemer University College offers equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants. In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be considered first for this position.

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items Appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Feb23	A **Dutch service** will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3 p. m. Rev. van Egmond preaching.
April 5	**Family Outreach Ontario Conference** Theme: Sharing Strength and Hope for Recovery from chemical dependencies. Keynote speaker:Glenn Allan. Bethel CRC, **Newmarket**. 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
May 3	**CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, 547** West Fifth Street, **Hamilton**, Ontario Celebrating **50th anniversary**. Open House at the school from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Dinner at Michelangelo's Banquet Ctr. Social at 5:30 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m.$40.00 per person. To order tickets please send names & cheque payable to Calvin Christian School to Ena Mostert,22 Ambassador Drive, Hamilton, ON L9C 2N8

"WE STAND BENEATH OUR ROOFS"

DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING (1992) LTD.

Free Estimates
R.R. #1, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Marty: (905) 563-7374
Chuck: (905) 646-0199
Fax: (905) 563-0301

EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS HORIZONS You can advertise in *Christian Courier*'s Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25 + GST. Call: 1-800-969-4838 for details.

Job Opportunity

Pastor of Spiritual Formation:
First CRC, a dynamic and growing church in Calgary, AB is looking for a **full-time Associate Pastor of spiritual formation.** Areas of responsibility include: developing and overseeing small group, education, and pastoral care ministries, and preaching/teaching in public worship. If you're a self-starter, able to equip others and want to join an exciting team of leaders for creative ministry, we want to hear from you. Please send your inquiries and/or resumes by February 17, 2003 to:
Mr. John Knibbe
(e-mail:firstcrc@shaw.ca) or fax 403-243-7710 or call 403-243-2244.

60 Years of God's Faithfulness!
With praise & thanksgiving to God,
we invite all former students, parents & staff
to attend
HOLLAND MARSH DISTRICT CHRISTIAN SCHOOL'S
60th Anniversary Celebrations
to be held on
Saturday, February 15th.

OPEN HOUSE
1 p.m. at HMDCS
18955 Dufferin St.
Newmarket, ON

CELEBRATION CEREMONY
3 p.m. at Bethel CRC
333 Davis Dr.
Newmarket, ON

For more info call (905) 775-3701 or visit www.hmdcs.ca

I'm looking forward to meeting my *neighbours.*

For me it's similar to moving into a new neighbourhood. I'm excited about making friends who have the same interests. It's sure to happen in a community of like-minded people with shared experiences and an active outlook on things.

shalom EVERGREEN TERRACE

NOW IS THE TIME TO RESERVE YOUR NEW HOME!
Select suites available from $132,900
- six whirlpool appliances, parking, storage locker
- guest suite, resident lounges, gazebo
- active 55 plus Christian Community

CALL (905) 945-9208
275 MAIN STREET EAST, GRIMSBY

TIME FOR NEW FURNITURE?

Come and see our beautiful showroom with the European flair!

SCHRÖDER FURNITURE

... for that special item!

Our "coil" spring furniture has all the support and comfort you need.

Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

CITIES of the REFORMATION TOUR

14 fun filled days of learning and fellowship
APRIL 22 - MAY 6, 2003

Free stop-over in Holland
$3175.00 p.p. ex. Tor. dbl. occ.
plus dep. taxes

Visit: Martin Luther area.....Erfurt
Learn: About John Hus.....Prague
Enjoy: The music of.....Vienna
See: John Calvin's City.....Geneva
Touch: The Catechism.....Heidelberg

Personally escorted by:
Rev. & Mrs. John & Rita Klomps

For complete information and reservation, please call or write:

Rev. John G. Klomps
Advantage-Meadowvale Travel
2283 Argentia Rd., Unit 9B
Mississauga, ON L5N 5Z2

Tel: 905-826-4141
or toll free: 1-800-387-2421
Fax: 905-858-1704
home tel: 905-824-5074

Reg #1518992

News

Water purification company stays true to its vision

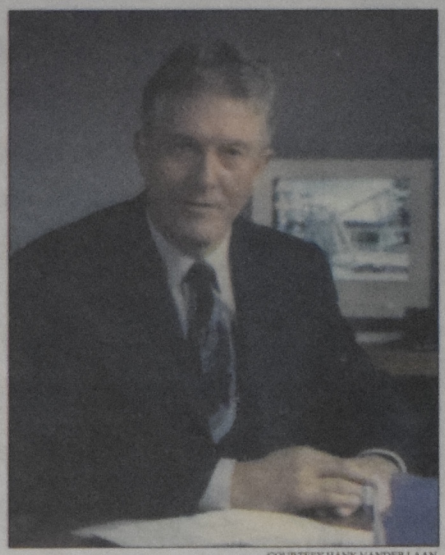
Alan Doerksen

LONDON, Ont. – Over 25 years, Trojan Technologies has grown from a small company in London, Ont., to a large international corporation, but it has stayed true to its original vision, which is: "We value the generations to come, and we will leave a sound company committed to improving the health of our global environment."

Hank Vander Laan, chairman of Trojan, devised that vision statement in 1977, when he and a partner bought the company. As its president and CEO in 1977, Vander Laan had a vision to do "something special with wastewater management." The main focus of the company continues to be using science and technology in ways which are "environmentally enhancing."

In the '70s, the company had a patent in ultraviolet (UV) technology, and Vander Laan decided to develop that further. It worked. Now, the company has grown to the point where its revenues are more than $92 million a year, with 95 per cent of its business being for export, Vander Laan explains in an interview with *Christian Courier*.

"It's become a world leader in its field, doing business with about 35 countries," and has offices in the U.S. and several European countries, reports Vander Laan. Trojan has staff of more than 350 employees around the world, including 80 professional engineers, 50 with PhDs.



COURTESY HANK VANDER LAAN

Hank Vander Laan, chairman of Trojan.

Foundation of faith

But it took Vander Laan and his colleagues eight years to make Trojan a profitable company, he says. "Those were very challenging years."

Vander Laan is a member of First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont., and asserts that his faith influences his interest in the environment. His faith also affects his interest in creating a good business environment for Trojan's staff, shareholders and customers.

According to Trojan's website, "Comprising internationally recognized experts in microbiology, chemistry, and engineering, Trojan's research and development team creates many of today's most successful UV technology innovations. Trust, integrity, teamwork, respect for employees and customers, and a strong sense of purpose — these are the underpinnings of Trojan's corporate culture. By creating a positive work environment that both challenges and rewards employees, Trojan is able to meet its commitments of providing lasting solutions to environmental problems."

With about 3,000 municipal systems in more than 25 countries using its technology, Trojan has the largest installed base of UV disinfection systems operating around the world, reports the company. Trojan specializes in the design, manufacture and sale of UV disinfection systems for municipal wastewater, drinking water systems for residential, municipal and commercial use, and industrial systems for food and beverage, and pharmaceutical applications. Trojan's residential systems can work in such settings as rural homes, cottages, hospitals, restaurants and nursing homes. Trojan also provides advanced UV solutions for the treatment of environmental contaminants.

Mystique about UV

"There's a certain mystique about UV," Vander Laan told the *Toronto Star* recently. "You can't smell it and you don't see anything — except a blue lamp, and that's not the UV, which is invisible light. Yet you're destroying microbes that are invisible to the eye." There was also a certain skepticism about UV in the early days, he says. Though it had been proven effective more than 100 years ago, "there were a lot of shoddy UV units" produced by companies that didn't know what they were doing.

Having clean municipal water supplies has become a vital issue in recent years, especially since the mishandling of the water supply in Walkerton, Ont., where seven people died and 2,300 became sick from the local water in May 2000. Although Trojan's technology is not being used in that town, Vanderlaan tells CC, "We work with Walkertons all the time." A recent example is the city of North Battleford, Saskatchewan, in which Trojan installed a municipal water purification system after 2,000 people got sick from drinking the water there, and 50 were hospitalized, reports the *Star*.

Trojan's UV-Swift system, which treats municipal water supplies, was launched in June 2000, shortly after the Walkerton tragedy. According to Trojan's website. "Recent findings have proven that UV is effective in eliminating disease-causing pathogens found in drinking water that are resistant to conventional chemical disinfection. UV does not alter the taste, color or odor of water and is a safe alternative to chemical disinfection, which produces harmful cancer-causing by-products."

"The assumption was that chlorine could deal with pathogens, but that is no longer so," explains Vander Laan.

Advising governments

The Ontario government has also asked Trojan to help improve water supplies in that province by putting more barriers in place to take pollution and pathogens (such as E. coli) out of water.

Until October 2001, Vander Laan was Trojan's president and CEO. At that point, he stepped down, but continues on as chairman of the board, and continues to work on key projects. One of those projects is the Water Treatment Advisory Network, which he is chairing, and which includes Trojan and other companies in related fields. Together, they interface with governments and provide them with free advice. With the task of providing a clean water system, "industry can't do it all by itself, and neither can government," says Vander Laan.

Recently, Trojan has become involved with major projects, such as a $15-million contract to clean out a contaminated aquifer in Orange County, California. Because of the high level of pollution there, that water supply had been closed down for years, and local people "have been suing each other for 20 years without a solution to the problem." But since Trojan has started working on that project, "now those aquifers are being opened up again," says Vander Laan. "Everybody wins in that solution."

Trojan is also researching ways to eliminate pharmaceuticals from water supplies. When people take pharmaceutical medicines, "about 90 per cent of the pharmaceuticals go back into the water," explains Vander Laan. "We need to eliminate those."

Cutting pollution

Considering the Kyoto Accord on cutting down pollution, Vander Laan says, "My reaction is, anything we can do to reduce pollution we should be doing. From a Christian point of view, we have the responsibility to reduce" our imprint on the environment. However, God also gave people a mandate to develop the environment, he notes.

"I think we need to begin with ourselves: the vehicles we drive, the packaging we insist on," he asserts. "Car pollution is probably the greatest contaminant." He observes that many people are driving larger cars again, like before the 1970s oil crisis. Some people don't like to hear that they need to do something personally to help the environment. Instead, they prefer to blame industry for pollution. But Vander Laan's approach to helping the environment is "What can I do myself in a small way?"

New leadership

Taking over from Vander Laan at Trojan is Allan Bulckaert, 51, who previously worked with Siemens Automotive for 14 years. Bulckaert (of Flemish descent) sees Vander Laan as "the visionary," and himself as "a more hard-nosed guy with operational skills," reports the *Star*.

In Trojan's latest annual report, Bulckaert expresses his interest in expanding Trojan's work considerably. He writes, "Opportunities exist for Trojan around the globe as awareness of impending water shortages and deteriorating water conditions creates a need for innovative, reliable and cost-effective technology. We expect that, by 2006, Trojan Technologies will be a $250 million company solely in the water treatment industry...."

But in the wake of the recent Enron corporate scandal, Bulckaert asserts, "Honesty and transparency in financial reporting should be a given; not something motivated by the recent events of corporate scandals. My commitment – on behalf of Trojan's senior management team and staff – is to provide ... thorough and relevant information that is both accurate and realistic in its outlook."

News Digest

Justice in pursuit

OLATHE, Kansas (*Kansas Star*) – A defendant who ran from a courtroom in Kansas was chased and caught by his own lawyer.

Geromi M. Holliday of Shawnee, Kansas, made it out of the court building in Olathe, but was caught a short distance away by Carl Cornwell. Holliday, who was on probation for cocaine possession, now faces an escape charge that carries a prison sentence.

"It made me mad," defence attorney Cornwell said of his client's decision to run.

When Holliday ran, the judge's assistant called deputies at the only public exit on the south side of the courthouse. As Holliday ran from the building and down the street, attorney Zane Todd joined in the chase when he saw Cornwell running. Holliday is being held in a county jail, reports the *Kansas City Star*.

A case of Enronitis

OTTAWA – Are some Canadian companies suffering from 'Enronitis'? Canada's Senate seems to think so.

Late last year, the Senate Standing Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce held hearings into so-called 'Enronitis', which the committee defines, in a press release, as being "the conditions and circumstances that have led to financial misreporting, fraud and other examples of corporate malfeasance at large, publicly-held companies."

"The Banking Committee is looking at what systemic improvements need to be made to better protect Canadian investors," explains committee chair Senator Leo Kolber. The committee, "with its vast experience in and knowledge of how corporations and markets function, is in an ideal position to analyze what has been done to date and consider what more might be needed."

The sky is rising

SAN FRANCISCO – "Contrary to Chicken Little's warning, the sky isn't falling, it's rising," reports the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "An important part of it, anyway – the 'tropopause,' the roof of Earth's lower atmosphere. It's rise – by an average of about 650 feet globally over the past 22 years – is new evidence for the reality of global warming, scientists say."